



Babysitting



It's a big responsibility to be a babysitter. You'll want to know all you can before you take your first assignment. Use this publication to learn more about babysitting so you can become the best sitter possible. Go over each section several times to be sure you learn as much as you can. Before each job, use this guide to brush up on babysitting. Learning from each babysitting experience is also important. It helps the next time you babysit with a similar-aged child.

Life Skills Taught Through 4-H Babysitting Project

- Concern for others.
- Nurturing relationships.

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This publication is divided into several areas for your use. There are sections devoted to infants, toddlers, 3-year-olds, 4-year-olds, and 5-year-olds. After these sections on the needs of various-aged children are some suggestions for encouraging appropriate behavior and ideas on entertaining children so your stay with the youngsters is pleasant for them and you.

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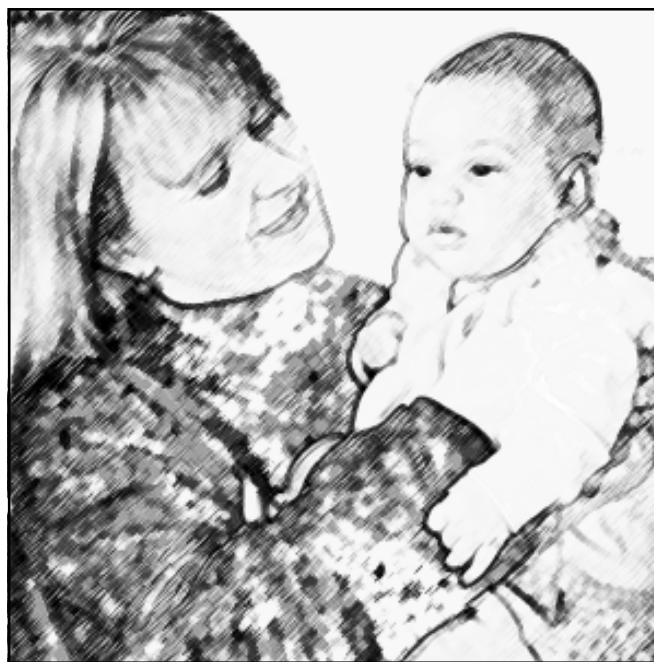
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Infants

Infants range in age from birth to 18 months (1½ years). At age 3 months, infants usually can hold up their heads without support. At 5 months, they can sit with support, and at 7 months, they can sit by themselves. Ages for developing skills vary somewhat.

Infants cry because they have no other way of letting adults know what they need. When a baby cries a lot, it is important to find out why. Try this checklist. Is the baby:

1. **Uncomfortable?**
 - a) wearing a wet diaper?
 - b) too cold or too hot?
 - c) in need of burping?
 - d) sick or hurt?
 - e) wearing clothing that is too tight?
 - f) being held in an unusual position?
2. **Hungry?**
 - a) time for feeding?
 - b) didn't get enough at the last feeding?
 - c) teething?
3. **Frightened?**
 - a) startled?
 - b) needs to be held close and reassured?
4. **In need of attention?**
 - a) lonely?
 - b) needs to be cuddled or played with?
 - c) fussy because of feeling tired?



The last problem is the hardest to resolve. Fussy babies may just want to be held, talked to, and cuddled. (Please see the section *Things Babies Like* for more information about how to do this.) However, if babies rub their eyes, yawn, or show other signs of tiredness, they may need to rest.

Sleeping

Ask the parent beforehand how the baby prefers to sleep. For example, babies might prefer to sleep in the crib, on the floor, in a lighted room, in a dark room, in complete quiet, or with the radio or television on.

Wherever you put babies down to sleep, place them on their backs. Research shows that putting a baby less than 1 year old to sleep on the baby's back rather than on the stomach or side is more likely to prevent death from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS. Also, take all soft stuffed toys, pillows, and blankets away from the baby's sleeping place. These items may cover the baby's mouth and nose and block breathing.

You might try humming your favorite tune; babies like soft music. They can feel a special warmth in your voice and in the way you handle them. After the baby has settled down, slip quietly out of the room. Remember, however, to check in occasionally to make sure things are still all right. This is especially important when a child has a cold or other illness.

Feeding and Burping

Have the parents tell you everything you need to know about the baby's feeding schedule. Have them show you where the bottles are kept, how to prepare the formula or baby food, how they feed the baby, and when the baby will likely need to be fed. Write down the information; then ask how closely you should stick to the schedule. (Some parents want you to wait until the child wakes for feeding.) If the feeding schedule is changed, note the time of each feeding for the parents.

Now let's feed the baby. Find a comfortable chair, and place a towel or clean cloth diaper on your

shoulder. Have the food ready and on the table in front of you. Make sure it's out of reach of the baby if you don't want a big mess! Check to see if the bottle is the right temperature by shaking the formula thoroughly and squirting a few drops on the inside of your wrist. If it is not lukewarm, warm it up or cool it down until it is. To warm up a bottle, don't heat it directly in a microwave oven. You may heat water in a glass container in a microwave and then put the bottle in the hot water until the formula is the correct temperature.

Hold the baby close to you with one arm. Use the other arm and hand to feed the baby. Place the child in a cradling-like position with head slightly elevated to allow food to flow easily to the stomach. Place small amounts of food on the baby's spoon and insert it into the mouth. Slant the spoon upward using the roof of the mouth to slide in the food. You may place an older baby in a high chair, making sure the baby is strapped in securely and wearing a bib.

When feeding from a bottle, hold the bottle high enough to allow the milk to fill the nipple so the baby does not suck air but low enough to avoid choking the baby. When babies quit sucking, they have had enough, have a gas bubble and need burping, or are taking a rest. Wait a little while; then offer the bottle again. The baby will resume

sucking if he or she is still hungry.

The next step is to burp the baby. This helps the child push air out of the stomach. Place a clean towel or cloth diaper on your shoulder. Hold the baby so that the head rests on your shoulder and pat lightly on the back. Continue patting until you hear burps. If you have tried for quite a while and you hear no burp, it might mean the baby doesn't need to burp or you need to shift the baby's position and try again.

Changing the Diaper

Most parents have certain ways of changing the baby's diaper. It's best to ask them to show you their procedure. Most parents use disposable diapers. If the family uses cloth diapers, ask them to show you how to fold the diapers for their child.

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If you aren't able to watch the parents beforehand, try this general procedure: First, lay out all of the things you will need (diaper, diaper wipes, washcloth, or whatever the parents instruct you to use). Take the infant from the crib or playpen. Place the baby face up on the changing table. Always keep one hand on the tummy so the baby won't roll off. Before you take off the diaper, look carefully to see how it was put on the baby. This will help you put the dry one on properly. Remove the diaper, and clean the baby with diaper wipes or a damp washcloth. The parent may suggest that you apply a small amount of lotion or other medicated ointment to the clean baby. Hold the baby's ankles with one hand and slide half the diaper under the baby's bottom. (With disposable diapers the decorative strip goes in front and the tabs are on the back side of the diaper.) Bring the other half of the diaper up between the baby's legs and fasten at the sides. If you're using cloth diapers, keep your fingers between the baby and the diaper to avoid sticking him or her. When safety pins are not in use, close them and put them out of the child's reach. Put the dry plastic pants on the baby and/or any other clothes the parents suggested. Put the baby back in the crib or playpen, and dispose of the diaper in the appropriate place. Most parents have a diaper pail or special place for wet diapers. Remember, babies squirm a lot, so **never leave a baby unattended in a place he or she could fall**. Finally, be sure to wash your hands.

Bathing

Most parents will have already bathed the baby when you arrive. However, if you know this will be your responsibility, practice beforehand with adult supervision. Pay close attention to each step, and keep a firm grip on the baby at all times. **Never leave a baby unattended in water**. Keep a firm grip to prevent an accident and avoid frightening the infant.

Once again, it is important to have everything you need placed on the bath tray before you put the baby in the water. Prepare the tub of water and check its

temperature by dipping your elbow into the water. Test to make sure it is lukewarm. Remove all your rings or jewelry that might scratch the baby. Follow the steps for washing that the parent showed you. **Remember, never leave the baby unattended.**

Bath Tray Equipment

- Bath towel
- Soft washcloth
- Baby blanket
- Basin or tub of warm water
- Baby soap, shampoo, and lotion
- Diapers (safety pins for cloth diapers)
- Baby's clean clothing.

Things Babies Like

Most of all, babies need to be loved and cuddled. When children are babies, they are totally dependent on older people to take care of them. It is a time when they learn to trust others to care for their interests and needs.

Babies are interesting little people. Even though they cannot talk back, they like to be talked and sung to, and they like to play peekaboo. You are being a teacher when you play with words, songs, and simple games. It is fun for both of you and helps babies grow and learn.

Speak softly while you smile, and look right into the baby's eyes. Say his or her name often. Talk about happy and interesting things. Stop talking after a bit, and watch. Babies' eyes may light up with interest, and they may coo with gurgling or humming sounds. An older baby may babble, making sounds more like words. Babies loves it if you imitate their sounds back. They may make more sounds if you again stop and watch. The two of you will be having a conversation.

Singing nursery rhymes or simple little songs that you remember from your childhood is also fun for babies. They like hearing the rhythm of the tune and the words, including words that rhyme. Babies also like to have you show them simple books. Younger babies may be propped against your chest while you are sitting down, or you can lay them on their backs on the floor or place them in an infant seat, securely strapped in. Older babies may like to sit alone for a

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short time close beside you. Sit or lie on the floor beside the baby while you read, and make sure the baby's eyes are looking at your book.

Babies like brightly colored toys and toys that move. Young babies like to look at human faces. They will stare at a mobile or shake a rattle for long periods of time, trying to learn about these newfound objects. They also like cuddly toys and toys that play music. As they get a little older, they like toys they can chew on to build strong teeth.

All in all, babies are not hard to please. Keep them dry, well fed, comfortable, and give them a little attention, and they'll like you just fine.



Toddlers

Babies from 18 months to 3 years old are usually considered toddlers. Watching a child grow from age 18 months to 3 years is a fascinating experience. The child who was toddling at 18 months will be walking upstairs and using alternate feet by age 3. Likewise, the child who could only say 10 or 12 words as an early toddler will be speaking to you in three-word sentences when 2 years old, and four- and five-word sentences when 3 years old. She or he also will go from awkward efforts at throwing a ball or drawing to being skilled at riding a tricycle and coloring with crayons.

If you observe toddlers closely, you might notice they spend a lot of time doing their own thing. They like other people in the room nearby, but basically they play by themselves. This is usually referred to as parallel play. When they do choose to play with other children, they may either hug them or push them out of the way. This is a time when children learn the difference between people and physical objects—a time when they want you right beside them one minute and shake their heads and push you away the next. Try to accept this as part of their growing independence. By the time they reach 3, they are much more cooperative and even demanding of your time.

To entertain toddlers, you may give them large blocks, push-and-pull toys, and soft, cuddly toys. Play with them! This is a time you can teach them about the world through their senses. For this reason, it is better not to give them anything that shouldn't go in the mouth, can't withstand feeling and investigating, or can't undergo a few hard knocks. Babies and toddlers can choke or suffocate on small items such as buttons, board game tokens, marbles, and similar objects.

Test the safety of small objects: if they are small enough to fit inside a toilet paper tube, you should put them out of reach.

The last idea to consider is that toddlers generally do not ask for help, but be ready to help. They often become frustrated with things that are too hard for them to do. Remember that toddlers have short attention spans and generally aren't particularly interested in finishing what they start. They may need your help with not becoming too upset by things and with putting away toys.

No two children are alike. Some develop more quickly in certain areas and more slowly in others. The information in this publication is a general view of how children perform.

Three-Year-Olds

Children 2 years of age are independent and eager to do for themselves. As they mature to 3-year-olds, they begin to depend on and want to imitate older people. Three-year-olds need attention and praise from older people. When given genuine praise, they work even harder to do things that please others. Unlike 2-year-olds, they have learned to listen to older people and, through listening, they learn fast.

Three-year-olds ask many questions. They are curious and eager to learn. They question older people, get an answer, and then ask “why” time after time after time! They are able to talk in three- to five-word sentences and find great fun in using new words they learn.

Three-year-olds are usually quite confident in their muscle control. They can climb up and down stairs, ride a tricycle or other riding toys, and keep their balance in most activities.

Three-year-olds usually enjoy playing in groups of two or three children. They are more willing to wait their turn and try to cooperate with other children. They grow tired at times and become aggressive with other children, but this is all an important part of learning to get along with others.

Three-year-olds usually enjoy such things as tricycles, climbing toys, and large blocks with which to build. They like dress-up clothes and housekeeping toys that can be used to imitate older people whom they see and admire. They also like messy activities like working with clay, sand, and mud—things they can squeeze between their fingers and toes.

Try to remember that this is an age of wanting to be liked and of wanting to have the attention of grown-ups. When they put their shoes on all by themselves, use the toilet without any help, or learn a new rhyme, they want people to notice and be proud of them.

Children develop at different ages and in different ways. Try to keep in mind that basically they want to do what is right and need you to help them.



Four-Year-Olds

Four-year-olds are often quite active. Much like 3-year-olds, they want to become adultlike. Unlike 3-year-olds, they want to do it by trying things on their own. They work with others as long as others don't get in the way.

Four-year-olds have active minds. They go exploring to see what they can find or sit for periods of time working on something of interest. They often pretend to be different people, like the king of the world or an astronaut approaching Mars. They can turn an old cardboard box into a super-doooper spaceship with all of the latest controls.

Four-year-olds are great talkers. Unlike 3-year-olds who want praise, 4-year-olds often praise themselves by bragging. They often like to play with words and delight in using silly words. They entertain themselves by pretending to be several characters at one time. No other person does a better job of being batter, first baseman, pitcher, and catcher all at the same time.

Four-year-olds are gaining more control of their muscles and are able to use their arms, legs, hands, and feet separately. They can skip on one foot and walk upstairs without holding on. Their major difficulty is usually that of moving too quickly rather than a lack of coordination.

Four-year-olds usually pick a friend of their own sex and enjoy playing in groups of three or four. Although they have learned to take turns, they often boss other children around or move someone aside to get their own way.

Four-year-olds prefer toys and materials they can manipulate and use for building. They like puzzles, woodworking tools, puppets, dress-up clothes, and building toys. Outside they like swings, slides, tricycles, and lots of space to run.



This is usually a good time to begin with simple songs and finger plays. Four-year-olds like to learn simple rhymes and to use their hands to tell a story. They also like art activities, such as pasting and cutting, painting, using clay, and other manipulative activities.

This is an age of testing and proving oneself. It is a time when adults need to have lots of patience and to show them they are loved and respected as individuals.

Some children are outgoing, while others are shy and withdrawn. What's most important is that they are allowed to express what they feel and to grow from this self-expression.

Five-Year-Olds

Five-year-olds are more settled and serious about life. They are concerned with finishing what they start and learning about the real things in the world. They like to talk about everyday places (grocery store, post office, kindergarten) and people (firefighters, teachers, clerks, nurses).

Five-year-olds are beginning to organize what they learn into meaningful concepts. They learn to use letters to print their names; count a number of objects; and recite rhymes, letters of the alphabet, and songs. As they mature toward 6 years of age, their interests continue to grow, and they develop the skills needed for the first year of school. This is a time when children need good experiences with the world and the people around them. If you encourage them to learn and they know their efforts are worthwhile, they will look on learning as an enjoyable experience.

Five-year-olds have more coordination and control of their muscles than 4-year-olds. They can skip using alternate feet, balance on a curb or balance beam, and climb with little difficulty. They also have developed the fine muscles that help them cut things with scissors and hold a crayon to write.

Five-year-olds like to play in groups. They are generally cooperative and enjoy games that involve sharing and taking turns. Dress-up clothes and imaginative play often appeal to 5-year-olds.

They enjoy games and activities that require more skill and participation. They like to paint pictures of familiar things, make collages and paper crafts, and play guessing and reasoning games.

When working with 5-year-olds, it is important to remember that although they are leaving early childhood, they still have times of immaturity and uncertainty about the world around them. For this reason, it is important to pay special attention to the child's feelings and questions.

Remember, no two children are alike. Some feel self-confident and eager to learn, while others need your help and encouragement.

Encouraging Good Behavior

Try a positive approach. Think before acting. Often we act on our first impulse, but sometimes it is not good to do so. Think of positive ways to react to children's behavior. Most disruptive behavior can be avoided by showing interest and praising good behavior.

Praise the child's efforts. Let the child know you appreciate a good attitude and cooperation. Children respond positively to genuine respect and praise.

Give positive suggestions. Think before you speak. Rather than saying to the child, "Don't run in the flower bed!" say something like "Let's stand here and name the different colors of flowers that we see!" (Negative suggestions often give the child ideas for inappropriate behaviors.)

Speak in a pleasant, but firm voice. Avoid nagging. Keep your suggestions to a minimum, and always speak kindly, even when speaking firmly.

Be consistent with your request, and follow through on the things you say. If you say you are going to do something, do it. For example, if you say "If you pull your sister's hair again, I'm going to put you in your room," follow through. It is generally better not to make threats. If you laugh at a child for a certain behavior one time, don't turn around and punish for it the next time. These mixed signals confuse children.

Prepare the child for changes. Preparing children for things to come (bedtime, dinner, clean-up) by giving them a five-minute warning often helps them to be ready when the event occurs. For example, "Dinner will be ready in 10 minutes," or "Okay, we'll do ring-around-the-rosy one more time; then we'll get dressed for bed."

Give logical consequences when possible. For example, "If you run with the scissors, you might fall and cut yourself. Let's use the scissors at the table."

Offer choices only when you want the child to have a choice. If the parent has left instructions for the children to drink milk, don't complicate matters by asking if they would like milk or pop. Give choices when you can, like "Would you rather play a game or read a story?"

Let the child know you appreciate a good attitude and cooperation. Children respond positively to genuine respect and praise.

Avoid threatening or withdrawing privileges.

When a child is mischievous, withdrawing a privilege or threatening only makes the child angry at you and you angry at the child. This can cause an unhappy situation for the rest of your stay. Instead, try shifting attention to a desirable activity.

Accept the child's feelings. Even though the child's feelings seem inappropriate and you have to insist on certain behaviors, accept the child's feelings of disgust, anger, or confusion, and try to help him or her understand the situation: "I understand that you're mad at me right now."

Why Children Misbehave

Children misbehave because they:

- don't know what is right or what could happen as a result of misbehavior.
- are curious and want to know why.
- want to be independent.
- mean to be helpful.
- are bored.
- want to be seen and heard rather than pushed aside.
- are angry.
- are frightened or frustrated.

When the Child Won't Stay in Bed

There are many reasons children won't stay in bed. Often, they are frightened, bored, excited, or not tired yet. Did you follow the child's bedtime routine? If the family doesn't have a specific routine, spend a few quiet minutes right before bedtime reading a story or talking. Let the child know you will be right in the other room, and there is nothing to worry about.

When Temper Tantrums Occur

Different children have different ways of reacting to frustration and displeasure. Some throw themselves on the floor and scream and kick. The best way to avoid such behavior is to watch for signs of irritability and sleepiness and try to change the activity or situation to prevent the child from becoming upset. If a tantrum does occur:

- Stay close by and protect the child from getting hurt.
- Stay calm and avoid getting angry or upset with the child.
- Be ready to comfort the child as the tantrum draws to a close, but do not encourage more tantrums by rewarding him or her.
- You must **never** shake an infant or child for any reason, as this could cause brain damage and/or death.

When Children Disagree

Children naturally like to disagree. Sometimes their disagreements turn into fights. Your best effort to stop fighting is to separate the children and get them playing with different things. It is better not to try to blame one or the other. That would only leave one child feeling worse and sometimes more eager to fight again. Strive to ignore minor disagreements so the children learn how to handle their differences. Model to them how they could use words to settle the disagreement.

Responsibilities of the Sitter to the Family

1. Interview the parents before accepting the job.
 - Ask if you may come for a pre-visit or arrive early for the actual job.
 - Ask questions to become acquainted with the children, pets, and home.
 - Find out their expectations.
2. Talk over the job with your parents.
 - Let them know where and when you will be working and the time you expect to get home.
 - Let them know what transportation arrangements have been made.
 - Know where your parents will be in case of an emergency.
 - Also, leave with your parents the telephone number of where you will be babysitting.
3. Know your job. Get as much prior experience under supervision as you can. This helps you meet your responsibility to keep the child safe and happy until the parents return home.
4. Be in good health. Parents would rather find another sitter than expose their children to a bad cold or the flu. Give the parents as much notice as possible to allow time to arrange for another sitter. (You might want to suggest a reliable substitute.)
5. Be prepared to handle minor accidents, first-aid concerns, and emergencies. If there is an emergency, know that your first responsibility is to get the children to a safe place and then call the parents.
6. Have a sheet ready with all of the information you need.
 - Parents can fill out an information sheet like the one in the back of this publication or provide any other information they think is important.
7. Know where certain things can be found:
 - extra clothing and bed linens
 - controls for the furnace and/or air conditioner
 - light switches, candles and matches, and flashlight
 - first-aid equipment and supplies
 - fire extinguishers
 - door alarms and security system
 - circuit breaker box and water/gas shutoff
 - emergency exits and how doors and windows lock in case of fire.

Familiarizing yourself with the house does not allow you the privilege of snooping into private places. Personal belongings and closed drawers and closets are off limits, unless there is something you need to do a better job of babysitting.

8. Be aware of all necessary arrangements/agreements when you take the job:
 - time of arrival and expected time to leave
 - transportation to and from
 - amount you will be paid
 - extra responsibilities (dinner, cleaning, etc.)
 - use of telephone, radio, television, and computer
 - snacks
 - whether or not your friends are welcome while babysitting.
9. Feel free to ask all the questions you consider important. The parents will appreciate your concern.
10. When your employers return home, report on what happened, especially if you considered anything unusual.

DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR TO A STRANGER!

Determine what he or she wants without opening the door. If there is a screen door, keep it locked and talk through it. If not, talk from a nearby window.

If the stranger has something to deliver, motion or tell the person to leave it at the door. Get it after the person has gone.

Responsibilities of the Family to the Sitter

This section has been prepared so you may show it to the parents for whom you babysit. It will help them to know the type of information and help you need from them before you babysit with their children.

Parents:

1. Meet your babysitter before the first assignment so the sitter can know you, your children, and your home.
2. Introduce the sitter to the physical setup of your home: how to lock and unlock the doors; where to find light switches and telephones; how to regulate the furnace; where to find the child's food, clothing, equipment, and playthings; and where to find a flashlight.
3. Acquaint the sitter with the schedule of your particular household, such as information about mealtime, where the child plays, what time he or she should go to bed, the bedtime ritual (such as prayers, story, etc.), whether the light should be left on or the door left open, where the extra bedding is kept.
4. Acquaint the sitter with family pets and their habits.
5. Point out any possible danger spots in your home—fireplace, etc.
6. Show the sitter where food is kept and give instructions about feeding.
7. Instruct the sitter concerning whether he or she may go to sleep after the children are asleep.
8. Have an understanding as to any extra chores the babysitter is expected to do—dishes, etc.
9. Have clear understandings about friends visiting; use of the telephone, radio, television, and computer; snacks; etc.
10. Prepare your children to understand that they must obey the sitter.
11. Have an agreement as to the rate of pay.
12. Complete the necessary information on paper regarding your whereabouts and so on.
13. Make arrangements for getting in touch with a neighbor or someone else in case of emergency.
14. Make arrangements for safe transportation for the sitter.

Babysitter Etiquette

Telephone

- Take the child with you to the phone unless he or she can be kept in sight at all times.
- Avoid staying on the phone longer than necessary.
- **NEVER** volunteer information to a stranger. If you aren't sure who is calling, offer to take a message, and keep the conversation to a minimum.
- If you are allowed to make phone calls, keep them short in case the parents try to call and check on their children.

Answering the Door

- If it is someone you know, keep the visit short to avoid interfering with your job as the sitter.
- If it's a stranger, determine what he or she wants without opening the door. If there is a screen door, keep it locked and talk through it. If not, talk from a nearby window. **DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR TO A STRANGER.**
- If the stranger has something to deliver, motion or tell the person to leave it at the door. Get it after the person has gone.

Watching Television

- Ask permission to use the television. Many parents allow it but may prefer you watch it after the children have gone to bed.
- Find out if there are any special or favorite television shows/videos the parents want their children to watch. Also find out what shows/videos the children are not allowed to watch.

Snacks

- Most parents tell you what snacks you and the children may have. If not, it is better to settle for a glass of water than to raid the refrigerator. Remember that children may be allergic to certain foods.
- Remember, some children are on special diets, and some do not rest well when they eat or drink carbonated beverages or other drinks with caffeine before bedtime.



The Child's Safety

- The child's safety is of utmost importance.
- Watch for sharp objects and places where the child could get hurt.
- Check on a sleeping child periodically. Is the child warm, too close to the edge of the bed, or having trouble breathing? Are the covers over the child's head or binding him or her in some way?
- You should be with children you are babysitting every minute that they are awake other than when you go to the bathroom. You must **never** leave a child unattended in the tub, even for a minute.

Outdoor Play

- If you have the children in the backyard during the day, make sure that the front door is locked.
- If you take the children anywhere, make sure you have the house key with you when you leave.
- Have the children go to the bathroom before you leave.

Cleanup

- You are responsible for cleaning up messes you or the children make while you are on the job.
- Other cleaning responsibilities should be decided upon before you take the job and usually should be limited due to your responsibility of watching the child.

Hints on First Aid

There is always the possibility a child might become ill or get hurt while you are in a position of responsibility. While babysitters must always try to prevent accidents from happening, they should also be prepared to handle a crisis should one occur.

A general rule to follow is: Whenever the situation looks like it might be serious, don't waste time. Get in touch with the parents and/or doctor at once. If necessary, get in touch with your parents or a neighbor designated by the child's parents.

Some situations are minor enough that you can care for them yourself. Other situations require immediate care and temporary treatment until the doctor or other help arrives.

Here are some common and not-so-common situations and what to do when they occur:

Small Cuts or Scratches

Avoid touching the wound. Wash the wound with warm water and soap. Pat dry, and apply an adhesive bandage.

Cuts with More Severe Bleeding

Hold a thick, clean cloth directly over the wound. Try to position the cut area higher than the heart; apply pressure until bleeding stops or until the doctor or parents arrive.

Burns

Minor burns can be treated by placing them under cold running water and covering with cloth to block out air and relieve pain. Serious burns should not be touched or treated with ointment. Keep the child lying still and covered with a clean sheet or tablecloth. If blisters occur, protect them from breaking; the skin on the blister is the best possible dressing. Call for emergency help at once.

Stomachaches

The best treatment is usually rest and quiet. If pain is persistent or becomes increasingly severe, contact the parents.

Animal Bites

Bites deep enough to break the skin can be serious. Wash the wound with soap and water and call the doctor. Get a good look at the animal so you can identify what type it was and what it looked like. If it is a cat or dog bite, attempt to identify the animal's owner.

Something in the Eye

Don't poke around in the eye. Keep the child quiet and try to prevent rubbing of the eye. Pull the eyelid out and down over the lower lid to stimulate tears.

Nosebleed

Keep the child calm, sitting in a chair with head back or lying down with a pillow under the shoulders. Pinch the sides of the nose together and hold for 10 to 15 minutes. If bleeding has not stopped by this time, call the parents.

Choking

Encourage a choking child to cough. Do not stick your finger in the throat; this can push the object further down. If the child can't cough, speak, or breathe, perform the Heimlich maneuver (learned and practiced in a first-aid class). If the object still does not dislodge, call the fire department, emergency squad, or ambulance at once.

Blow to the Head

Observe the child carefully for signs of increasing lethargy (sleepiness), vomiting, or seizures, and check the pupils of the eyes to see if they are of equal size. When the parents return home, tell them about the blow, but if there is a problem, call the parents or doctor at once.

Poison

If a child swallows poison or medicine of any kind, get the container, and call the doctor at once. The doctor will want to know the ingredients of the substance and how much was taken before telling you what to do for the child. Follow the doctor's instructions. If the child is unconscious, get him or her to the hospital as soon as possible, taking the labeled container with the remaining poison with you. If you can't reach the doctor, call the Kentucky Regional Poison Center at **1-800-722-5725**.

Convulsions or Seizures

Your leader should have a resource person discuss convulsions and seizures at your training session. Protect the child from injury during the seizure, and call the parents and/or physician immediately. Make note of everything that happens before, during, and after the convulsion. Give this information to the parents when they return.

Entertaining the Small Child

Storytelling

Good storytelling involves more than reading a picture book or reciting a fairy tale from memory. It requires a little extra umph—like changing the tone of your voice, using puppets, or using your imagination to make the story come alive. To do this, it's important to feel a part of the story. Get excited when the wolf tries to snatch Red Riding Hood. Be sad when Eeyore loses his tail and happy when Pooh Bear finds it. How you feel about the story and how you let your feelings come out in your voice determines how well the child will like it.

Choosing a Story

Just like toys, different stories appeal to different ages and types of children. Very young children usually like stories with big pictures and things they can feel and do (like those with furry animals, zippers, and scratch-and-sniffs). Children around 2 to 3 usually prefer stories about things that concern them (like dressing, playing with new toys, and learning new skills). They like stories with simple plots and lots of colorful pictures. Often they like a story so much they ask you to read it to them over and over again. By age 4 or 5, children are interested in stories with more of a plot and involving more of the things going on around them. They like to hear about new experiences that other children have (like learning to whistle, going to kindergarten, or getting a new pet). They can sit for longer periods of time and usually like to learn new words and ways of doing things. Stories that follow along with pictures and use a lot of rhyming and repetition are particularly appealing to this age. Select a story that:

- Is appropriate to the child's level
- Is easy to tell
- Has good illustrations—simple, clear pictures without a lot of detail
- Is realistic and action-packed—one the child can feel a part of
- Tells about things a child is interested in and familiar with
- Doesn't scare the child.



Reading the Story

1. Read the story yourself before reading it to the child. Watch for words and ideas the child may be too young to understand.
2. Read slowly and allow the child plenty of time to see each picture. (Remember, things that seem unimportant to you might be important to the child.)
3. Encourage discussion. When children are free to talk about a story, they are less likely to misunderstand things as they go along. Also, some children like to make up their own stories.
4. Use gimmicks whenever possible. Puppets, felt boards, and other such illustrative materials are entertaining to the young child.
5. Use your own voice and gestures to make the story more realistic. Raising, lowering, and changing the tone of your voice with the different characters helps create the different personalities of the characters and encourages the child to listen.

Talk to your librarian about books especially popular with young children.

Bag of Tricks

Many professionals, like doctors, carpenters, and plumbers, have a special bag of tools or instruments they take with them so they can do a better job. When you babysit, you too can prepare a bag to take along with you. This bag can be called your “Bag of Tricks” and can contain all sorts of games, stories, toys, and simple art supplies. Having a kit like this gives you something special to do with the children and will probably make them eager to see you again and again. The kit can be made from anything from a large paper sack to a suitcase. Look around for something that can hold all the things you have collected and made. You might want to decorate it or let each child with whom you babysit help decorate it.

Include anything you think might interest a young child as long as it is not harmful to the child in any way. Look around the house for old toys you could repair and throw-away items you could make into toys. For example, an old milk carton makes a wonderful doll house. To make a sturdy building block, place one carton inside another.

Art Recipes and Projects

Finger Paint

- 1 cup flour
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1 cup water
- coloring (food coloring, powder paint, or poster paint)

Mix flour and salt. Add water, stirring until smooth. Add coloring.

Play Dough

- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup salt
- 2 tsp. cream of tartar
- food coloring or dry tempera paint for color
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 cup water

Mix dry ingredients together in a pot. Add oil and water, heat slowly, and stir until it is the consistency of mashed potatoes. Knead until smooth on a counter

What to Include in a Babysitter’s Bag of Tricks

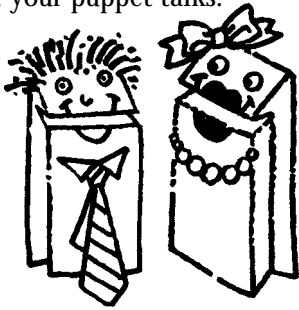
(suggested play materials)

Band-Aids®
blunt scissors
bubbles
clay or play dough
colored paper
colored pencils
crayons
doll or stuffed animal
finger paint
glue or glue sticks
magnifying glass
Nerf® balls
notebook of games,
finger plays, and songs
old magazines or books
paper sacks/paper plates
Ping-Pong® balls
pipe cleaners
puppets
puzzles
reusable items—aluminum dishes, toilet
paper tubes
simple games
small textured balls
special collection of yours
(cars, stamps, insects, etc.)
spools
stickers/sticker books
storybooks/tapes
string
yarn scraps
yo-yo

top or wax paper. Store in an airtight container.

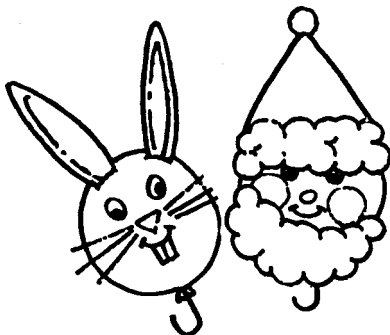
Paper Bag Puppets

1. Materials you will need:
 - paper bag
 - yarn and construction paper
 - glue and scissors
 - marking pens.
2. Cut eyes and nose from construction paper. Draw mouth in fold and flap of paper bag. Glue on eyes and nose.
3. Fix hair in length and style you like. Tie bits of yarn in the middle with shorter length of yarn.
4. Glue or staple hair to top and sides of bag.
5. Place hand inside of bag and position fingers in flap. When you move your hand up and down, your puppet talks.



Coat Hanger Puppets

1. Materials you will need:
 - coat hanger
 - nylon stocking
 - scraps of felt and yarn
 - glue and scissors.
2. Bend coat hanger to shape a face.
3. Pull nylon stocking down over coat hanger and tie hose around handle of hanger.
4. Decorate with felt pieces to make facial features.
5. Add yarn or cotton balls for hair.
6. Hold puppet in front of your face and make the



character come alive.

Finger Plays

The little boy looked all around. (cup hands around eyes)

He looked up, and then he looked down. (eyes look up and down)

What was he watching? What could it be?

Let's try to guess it, just you and me. (let the children guess)

Open, shut them, open, shut them, (hands open, palms up; then close into a fist)

Give a little clap. (clap hands together)

Open, shut them, open, shut them, (hands open, palms up; then close into a fist)

Put them in your lap. (fold hands in lap)

Once I had a big red ball. (make a large circle with arms)

It rolled away from me. (roll hands away from body)

But when I shouted, "Please don't go!" (shout!)

It rolled right back to me. (roll hands toward body)

Here's a bear sitting in his den,

Waiting for winter to come again. (put body in curled-up position)

He eats and eats to store up fat (eating motions)

And gets all ready for a long winter's nap. (head resting on folded hands)

Choosing a 4-H Sitter Makes Good Sense

Dear Parent,

You might be interested to know that I have attended the 4-H Babysitting Clinic. Feel free to ask about my training and experience with young children. I understand how precious your child is to you, and I welcome the opportunity to discuss anything you consider important. Likewise, I would like to discuss certain things I consider important such as: (1) how long you will be away and how you can be reached; (2) specific instructions about the children and the house; (3) an agreeable pay scale; (4) transportation; (5) and answers to the questions on the back of this sheet.

If possible, I'd like either to meet or have a telephone conversation with you prior to the planned babysitting time. This will allow time for you to acquaint me with the necessary information. This information also may be recorded on the back of this sheet for my use.

Having done that, you can look forward to your time away knowing you are leaving your child with a competent, responsible sitter who enjoys taking care of children and appreciates your confidence.

Sincerely,

(Name)

(Address)

(Phone)

(Rate/hour)

Information Sheet

- Ask ahead of time how many children there will be—**including** friends and relatives.
- Find out if any of the children in your care have allergies. Are there any foods, soaps, etc. that should be avoided?
- Be sure that any firearms in the home are locked up.

Parents' Names _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Where Parents Will Be:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

From _____ Until _____

Other Destinations: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

From _____ Until _____

Will be home at _____ a.m./p.m.

Names of Children (Nickname) Age

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Special Instructions:

Meals: Time _____

Menu _____

Snacks: Time _____

Menu _____

Medicine: _____

(type) (time) (amount)

Bedtime(s): _____

Bedtime Favors: (stories, toys, etc.) _____

Bedtime Tips: (prayers, night light, bath, etc.) _____

Other Privileges:

Outdoor play? _____

Special Video/TV Programs? _____

TV? yes no Computer? yes no

Location of: _____

First-aid equipment _____

Phone _____

Linens, extra clothes, etc. _____

Other Important Things: _____

<p>In Case of Emergencies:</p> <p>Contact _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Home) (Office)</p> <p>Doctor _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Home) (Office)</p>	<p>Ambulance _____</p> <p>Police/Sheriff _____</p> <p>Fire _____</p> <p>Closest Neighbor _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Home) (Office)</p>
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A Good Sitter Is Someone Who Is:

	I am:	I need to work on this:
Fond of children . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who likes children even when they misbehave. Someone who likes to play with children. 		
Patient . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who likes the natural inquisitiveness of young children. Someone who understands that children are still learning how to control themselves and get along with others. 		
Responsible . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone the parents can depend on to take good care of their children. Someone who considers the children's safety and needs above all else. Someone who can make wise decisions when emergencies arise. 		
Interested . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who encourages children by showing interest in the things they do. Someone who uses praise for appropriate behavior rather than threats for inappropriate behavior. 		
Flexible . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who can adapt to any situation. Someone who knows when to change plans because the child is becoming tired and irritable with the present activity. Someone who adapts activities to the abilities and interests of the particular child. 		
Consistent . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who follows through on what he or she says. Someone who says only things he or she means. 		
Willing to bend to the routines of the child . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who understands that children find security in daily routines, such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> bedtime/bath—prayers? story? night light? mealtime—washing? prayers? help with setting the table? television—favorite shows? for how long? snacks? 		
Prepared with good ideas . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who knows special games, songs, and stories to entertain children. Someone who brings a sack of "Fun Things to Do." 		

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