

Babysitting information



Family Information Service

01905 790 560

Babysitting information

This leaflet is for parents who are thinking of using a babysitter who is not a member of their immediate family.

What is a babysitter?

A babysitter is someone who looks after your children in your own home for short periods of time. Most parents need to use a babysitter at some stage whether it is to enjoy some free social time in the evening or to attend an appointment during the day.

How would I find and choose a babysitter?

- Talk to friends or relatives who have children. They may be able to recommend a babysitter they have used themselves.
- Consider older children of friends.
- Place an advert in a local shop window or on a school/college notice board.
- Contact a babysitting agency for details of babysitters in your local area. The Family Information Service can give you details of agencies.

If you don't know the babysitter, some precautions are advisable:

- Ask a potential babysitter to provide you with at least two people you could contact for a reference. These could include a parent who has used them previously, a college tutor or a teacher. Check the references thoroughly
- Introduce them to your children to see how they react to each other.

You will need to ensure that the babysitter understands any needs your child may have, such as allergies or dietary requirements. Tell them about the bedtime routine and what to do if your child won't settle.



Discuss rules with the babysitter before they agree to babysit for you

These could include things like:

- If the children wake up, are they allowed to come downstairs?
- Can the babysitter give the children a snack?
- Can the babysitter help themselves to a snack?
- Can the babysitter bring a friend along?
- Can the babysitter drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes in your home?

It is a parent's responsibility to make sure their children are safe, so you must be comfortable and happy with the babysitter you choose. Follow your instincts and if you have any doubts about a babysitter, don't take them on.

How much do babysitters normally charge?

The amount a babysitter charges per hour should be negotiated before any babysitting takes place. It will depend on experience and qualifications (if any) and time/day of the week (a higher rate would normally be paid for weekend babysitting and for after midnight).

Refreshments should be available and if the babysitter does not have transport, the cost of this may need to be paid too.

Would a babysitter be able to cope in an emergency?

Emergencies are rare but you have to think about what would happen if something went wrong. Always make sure the babysitter knows where you are and leave a contact telephone number. If this is not possible, leave the telephone number of a relative or close friend who lives nearby. It is also a good idea to find out if they have a first aid certificate.

Do babysitters need to be registered with Ofsted?

No, because they are looking after your children in your own home. Babysitters will not normally have a formal childcare qualification but parents usually prefer to use someone who has some experience of being with children.

What is the law regarding babysitters?

There is no law in England or Wales to prevent anyone of any age from babysitting, **but** a person under the age of 16 cannot be charged with neglect or ill treatment of a child left in their care. Parents remain responsible and can be charged themselves if their child is harmed in any way. The NSPCC recommend 16 as a minimum age for babysitting.

What is the law regarding leaving children at home on their own?

The law does not set a minimum age at which children can be left alone. However, it is an offence to leave children alone if it places them at risk. Parents can be prosecuted for neglect if they leave a child unsupervised 'in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health'. The NSPCC offers guidance to parents on leaving children alone and advises that:

- Children under the age of 16 should not be left alone overnight
- Children under the age of 13 are rarely mature enough to be left alone for more than brief periods of time
- Babies, toddlers and very young children should never be left alone.

You can get further guidance on this subject, including the 'Home Alone - advice for parents' leaflet by calling the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000**, or visiting their website at **www.nspcc.org.uk**



Useful contacts

First aid courses:

St John Ambulance

Visit: www.sja.org.uk

Tel: **08700 104950**

Three hour course valid for three years: 'Emergency life support (child and infant)'. Ideal for parents/guardians and people looking after children.

British Red Cross

Visit: www.redcross.org.uk

Tel: **0844 871 8000 (option 2)**

14 Hour Course: 'Practical first aid'. Suitable for anyone looking for a hands-on course.

Family Information Service

The Family Information Service (FIS) can provide a list of babysitting agencies. The FIS provides free and impartial information for families with children aged 0 to 19 years on:

- Childcare
- **Free** early education places
- Sport and leisure activities
- Your rights as a working parent
- People and services that support children, young people and their families
- Support for children with special needs and/or disabilities.

The FIS also provides information for people who want to work with children, young people and their families.

All information is available by phone, email or on our website.

You can contact the Family Information Service in the following ways:

By telephone:

01905 790 560 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Answer machine at all other times)

By fax:

01905 790 551

By post:

Family Information Service,
3 De Salis Court, De Salis Drive, Hampton Lovett, Droitwich,
Worcestershire, WR9 0QE

By email:

familyinfo@worcestershire.gov.uk

Online:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/familyinfo



This publication can be made available in other languages (including British Sign Language) and alternative formats (including large print, audio tape, computer disc and Braille) on request from the Marketing Team on telephone number 01905 728912 or by emailing njones4@worcestershire.gov.uk

'If you need help understanding this document in your own language, please contact Ethnic Access Link. Tel: 01905 25121' (*English*)

'যদি এই দলিলটি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় বুঝতে আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, অনুগ্রহ করে Ethnic Access Link (এথনিক অ্যাক্সেস)-কে 01905 25121 টেলিফোন নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন' (*Bengali*)

如果你需要這個文件的中文信息，請聯絡 Ethnic Access Link，電話是01905 25121 (*Cantonese*)

'Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tego dokumentu we własnym języku, zadzwoń do Ethnic Access Link. Tel: 01905 25121' (*Polish*)

'Se necessitar de ajuda para perceber o conteúdo deste documento na sua língua, contacte a associação Ethnic Access Link pelo telefone: 01905 25121' (*Portuguese*)

'Si necesita ayuda para entender este documento en su idioma, puede ponerse en contacto con Ethnic Access Link en el teléfono 01905 25121' (*Spanish*)

Bu dokümanõ kendi dilinizde anlamak için yardım isterseniz Ethnic Access Link ile temasa geçiniz
Tel: 01905 25121' (*Turkish*)

'اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کو آپ کی اپنی زبان میں سمجھنے میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے، تو براہ کرم Ethnic Access Link (ایتھنک ایکسس لنک) سے رابطہ کریں۔ ٹیلی فون: 01905 25121' (*Urdu*)

To the best of our knowledge all information is correct at time of printing. October 2008.