

Find and Interview Baby Sitters

Taking a little extra time to choose a babysitter can ensure that you are able to spend your time away confident that your children are happy and well taken care of. While it might seem like a lot at first, in the long run it is time well spent.

Where do you turn when you have your first child and start looking for your first babysitter? Here are some good places to start:

- Ask other moms and dads whose judgment you trust and who seem to love their babysitter.
- Talk to parents who go to the same library programs, preschool, day care and kid-oriented programs.
- Ask people at your church or work.
- Call the guidance counselor or employment office at your local high school or college and ask if they have students who are interested in child development or education.
- Check with YMCA and Red Cross to see if they offer babysitter training and have a list of students who are looking for work.

Remember, **the more people you ask, the greater amount of choices you'll have.** Baby sitters should be at least 13 if you need a sitter for time periods of 3 hours+ or late night sitting. However, short daytime sitting can be appropriate for sitters 11-12 years old, especially if they have Red Cross training. If you have a preemie or a baby with special medical conditions or needs, you will want to look for someone who is older that you know can handle more responsibility and has better judgment.

Make sure you take time to interview each babysitter you are considering. You can ask potential sitters your list of questions over the phone or in person; whichever is more comfortable for you. You may want to compile a list of phone questions first, and then have a second list of questions to ask if you decide you are ready to meet them at your home.

Expect to pay anywhere from \$10-15 per hour for one child. If you expect the baby sitter to do additional house work (i.e. laundry) or prepare a meal the price will increase. Most people recommend that you state what you are willing to pay up front. However if you have just moved to a new area you may want to ask the potential sitters what their normal rates are until you get a good idea what people in that geographic area expect. It can also be helpful to ask parents how much they pay their babysitter when you get the initial referral.

Introductory Questions

- What kind of skills and specialized training do you have?
- What immunizations do you currently have?
- What age children do you most enjoy? Least enjoy? Why? Which age group are you most comfortable/experienced with?
- What types of tasks are you comfortable with around the home?
- What is your availability?
- We are comfortable paying \$X per hour, is that a good match for what you are expecting?
- Why should I hire you?

This article is provided by Diapers Unlimited DyDee Service on 10/30/11 at www.DyDeeBaby.com. We have provided this in a format that you can open in Word and change to adapt for your family.

With infants and toddler that put everything they find in their mouths, you'll want someone who knows CPR and Infant Choking holds. Look for people who know things like how position your baby to prevent SIDS, and your preferred changing and feeding practices. If your child needs medication, make sure they know how to administer it, or are comfortable learning. It is up to you to make sure the administration of any medication is age appropriate for the age of the person you are interviewing (i.e. you should not expect an 11 year old to be comfortable administering breathing treatments). If you feel that this person may be a good match ask them for a few references to contact. Then let them know a time frame that you expect to contact them again.

Talking to References

Ask how long they've known the person and how they would describe them, along with specifics about the work they did and their responsibility level. Ask them how old their children are and if their children are excited to see this person when they arrive to baby-sit. Ask how well the person follows instructions, and if they react to different situations well. Ask if the person knows how to talk to children on their level to explain things or just tells them "no". Ask if the person is punctual when they are expected to arrive.

If you feel the person is not a good match for your family, politely tell them so and wish them good luck in their future.

Detailed Interview Questions

During the personal meeting keep in mind you're looking for someone who has a genuine interest in children. Watch how they interact with your child. Notice if they are enthusiastic and caring in their demeanor. There are different questions that you may ask if you have more than one child or if you have children of different ages. **This list was compiled with infants in mind.**

EXPERIENCE AND APPROACH

- Let's talk more about your experience.
 - Describe your most recent babysitting job.
 - What do you find is the most enjoyable aspect of babysitting?
 - What do you find is most challenging? What was your worst experience and why?
- How would you describe your approach to discipline? What age do you think discipline should start? What is your overall child care philosophy? (Yes, you can and should even ask this of a teenage babysitter.)
- What will you do if my child won't mind you or exhibits bad behavior such as biting? (This is an insightful question to determine how the potential babysitter processes the question and provides you with an answer. This also provides insight on disciplinary approach.)

SKILL ORIENTATION

- Do you do any regular work or volunteering with kids? If so, please describe it.
- Have you ever had to deal with an emergency situation while babysitting? What was it? Under what circumstances would you call me, while you are babysitting?
- Is there an adult or family member nearby in the event of an emergency whom you could contact?
- What kinds of activities would you do with my child who is x months old?
- Do you know how to feed an infant? A toddler? (You want to hear things like the sitter being knowledgeable about never to pop a bottle, heat it up in the microwave, or to feed a youngster uncut grapes).

PERSONAL

- Do you have any work restrictions? Do you have any allergies?
- Would you be comfortable in my home alone for x hours? At night?
- What type of commitment will you provide me that you will honor our agreement to babysit and not cancel? (This question is particularly important if you are hiring a sitter for key holidays or busy times such as New Year's Eve.)
- What can I do to make your experience with my child(ren) a success? Share with them your prepared list of questions and answers, any emergency contact posts you have and them know you will be able to be reached at all times, or if not, an alternate contact and their relationship with your family.

Warning Signs to look for

1. A person that lacks interest or is not engaged when speaking with you or interacting with your child.
2. If the person spends more time talking about the wage than asking questions about your family.
3. If you sense something amiss about the person, trust your instincts.

See our “Common Babysitter Questions” to prepare answers that your baby sitter will want to know. This list is on our website at <http://www.dydeebaby.com/Baby-Care.html> when you **scroll down to the General Care Section**.

Books to Help Your Child With a New Babysitter

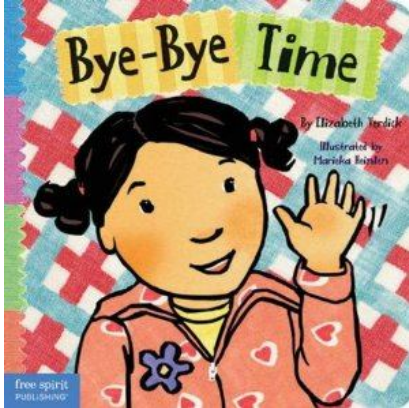
by Rivka Kawano

Leaving your child with a babysitter can be a new and scary experience for both of you. One of the best ways to calm your own fears is by carefully interviewing and selecting a sitter, and making sure you leave them all the information you need using the tools in the rest of this newsletter.

A great way to help your child enjoy their time with a babysitter is by thoroughly preparing them for what to expect. Make sure they get a chance to meet the babysitter ahead of time, talk to them about where you will be and when you will be back. And read them stories that will give you a chance to talk about their feelings and see that having a babysitter can be fun.

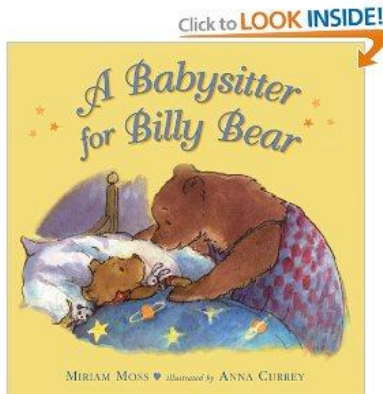
This article is provided by Diapers Unlimited DyDee Service on 10/30/11 at www.DyDeeBaby.com. We have provided this in a format that you can open in Word and change to adapt for your family.

Bye-Bye Time by Elizabeth Verdick



A simple and straightforward book, *Bye-Bye Time* by Elizabeth Verdick can be used for a babysitter in the home as well as if you are dropping your child off somewhere. It is simple and easy to understand, and gives your child reassurance that saying bye-bye to mom and dad every so often is normal and okay. You can talk about the routine when your child has a babysitter, and may even get some ideas from the book about how to make the transition easier.

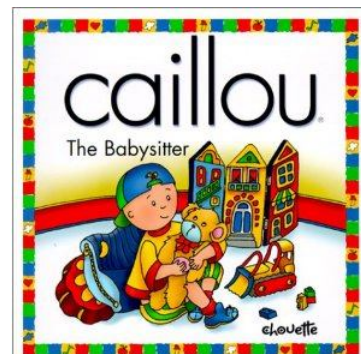
A Babysitter for Billy Bear



Billy Bear is having a babysitter for the very first time. He is a little nervous, but in the end finds out it is not so bad after all. This is a good book for helping your child open up about their feelings about babysitting and babysitters. It may be especially helpful for children who have a favorite loved stuffed animal, as Billy Bear does in the story.

Caillou: The Babysitter

Caillou is not sure about this babysitter - but she is caring and kind and helps Caillou have a great time until his parents come home from their night out. If your kids are familiar with the Caillou TV series, they will love being able to see their favorite character in this book too.



Making the Most of Books

As you are reading together, ask your child how the characters in the book are feeling, what they are doing, etc. It will help open doors to discussion and make your child feel comfortable with their emotions and able to deal with them.

Rivka Kawano is a mother to three toddlers who has had many wonderful babysitters. You can read more book reviews and ideas for things to do with your children on her website: www.BeautifulBooksforChildren.com

This article is provided by Diapers Unlimited DyDee Service on 10/30/11 at www.DyDeeBaby.com. We have provided this in a format that you can open in Word and change to adapt for your family.