

Teaching Guide

Safety First Babysitting



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Overview

Why even use the word “babysitting”? Half the time no baby is involved and caregivers have very little time to “sit.” Babysitting is really short term child care and parents are very concerned for the safety of their children. That’s why sitters have to understand safety-first child care.

Baby sitting is not limited to junior high age girls any more. This video follows three temporary child care givers who face a variety of challenges and learn the demands of safety first child care. As they handle a checklist of information, meal and bedtimes routines, play activities, discipline, and etiquette issues, viewers will learn new techniques for becoming a safety first babysitter.

Objectives

After viewing and discussing the videotape students will:

- Know to create a babysitting checklist to gather emergency information and special instructions for care.
- Understand how to handle mealtime and bedtime routines.
- Realize the importance of play time safety tips, and observe some planned play activities which focus on fun.
- Learn how to keep kids close, handle discipline issues, and deal with behavior such as temper tantrums and fights.
- Know how to respond to and handle emergencies.
- Learn about proper etiquette while on the job and how to determine what to charge for their services.

Discussion Starters

1. Sitters need information when they arrive at a job. What did the video show about getting information?

Brittany walks into an disorganized situation because Mr. and Mrs. Creighton don't give her much information. Mitch asks Mrs. Pantera if he can come early to meet Katie and Gabe and fill out his extensive checklist. He is more prepared. Maria also has a lot of questions and asks the Kellers for a tour of the home. She learns how the doors lock, how the alarm system works, where the circuit breaker box is located and other emergency information. Mrs. Keller is impressed when Maria asks if there are any instructions for watching TV or using the computer. Many families have a pet so it's a good idea to also meet the pet and find out if there are special instructions.

2. What situations did the sitters face regarding food?

Dinnertime comes and Brittany discovers the three girls haven't eaten. She has to search the refrigerator and cabinet for the makings of a meal. Mitch has better luck. Mrs. Pantera has a pizza and tells him how many minutes to cook it. She also explains how to warm a bottle in a hot water for six-month-old Gabe. Everything is under control for Maria. Mrs. Keller has already fed Devon, Tyler, and Joya and set out snacks for later.

3. How did the sitters in the video have fun with the children? Why are planned activities important?

Brittany, Mitch, and Maria fill their kid care kits with crayons, paper, books, games, and toys. Having planned activities is a good way to keep kids close, reinforce safety, and avoid discipline problems.

4. What behavior problems did the sitters in the video face?

Gabe cries when his Mom leaves so Mitch cuddles him and talks gently to him until he calms down. Lauren has a temper tantrum which gets on Brittany's nerves. Maria has to break up a fight between Devon and Tyler.

What behavior problems have you faced?

When should a sitter call an adult? (*When they feel they are losing control.*)

5. What safety precautions did the sitters in the video take?

Mitch knows that he should put baby Gabe to sleep on his back to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. He also takes toys and extra blankets out of the crib as a safety precaution.

6. What safety guidelines can you suggest?

Avoid toys that could cause a choking hazard for children under three. If a toy is small enough to pass through a toilet paper roll, it's probably too small for safe play.

7. Discuss the emergencies the sitters face.

When Brittany goes outside to bring in Kimmie's toy lamb she gets locked out of the house. Jennifer doesn't know how to unlock the door. Brittany panics but then goes to a neighbor for help. Luckily, the neighbor knows the code to open the garage door. Brittany is very relieved.

Maria faces a weather emergency when severe thunderstorm warnings are issued for her area. She herds the kids into the basement taking a flashlight, phone, and radio with her. She turns the situation into an adventure for the kids so no one becomes afraid or upset. The weather alert passes and the kids go back upstairs.

8. What precautions should a sitter take regarding fires?

If a fire breaks out, don't try to put it out. Get out of the house immediately and call the fire department. Candle fires are on the rise so sitters should be sure candles are not lighted when they are on a sitting job. If there is a power failure, use a flashlight, not a candle.

9. When is an emergency a true emergency and when should a sitter call 911?

Judging the severity of emergencies requires common sense. For example, if a child is choking but can still talk, it probably isn't an emergency. However, if the child can not talk and starts to lose consciousness, it's time to call the rescue squad. When in doubt, go for the safest solution.

10. What should a sitter do about homework?

Most parents allow homework if it's done after the kids are asleep.

11. Should friends visit when you are baby sitting?

You wouldn't take your boyfriend or girlfriend to a job at the mall and you shouldn't take him or her to your babysitting job. Your focus needs to stay on the kids.

12. Should you sleep while babysitting?

Parents expect you to be responsible for their children and that means staying alert all the time. If parents plan to stay out very late, they may give you permission to sleep.

13. What should you do about eating when babysitting?

Most parents will set aside some snacks or invite you to eat with the kids. If you're not sure, pack some food in your kid care kit. Never rummage through their cabinets eating food that wasn't designated for you.

15. How should a babysitter decide what to charge?

Kid care rates will generally depend on the community, number of children, lateness of the session, and how many chores the parents request. Check with more experienced sitters.

16. What should you do when a smoke alarm goes off, and you smell smoke or see flames?

The key here is to recognize that people come first. Make sure everyone is safe FIRST before worrying about property damage.

17. Did you have babysitters when you were younger? What qualities did you like best in your sitters? What qualities didn't you like?

18. Have you earned money as a babysitter? Was it a positive experience? Why or why not?

19. What would you use for a kid care kit? What would you put inside it to entertain children?

20. What do you think are the most important items on a babysitter's checklist?

21. How many children do you think is the limit for one sitter to watch?

22. What situations would prompt you to call the parents?

True and False Quiz: Safety First Babysitting

1. Writing down important information and arriving early to meet the children are not important parts of babysitting . T or F?

2. The security alarm code, the location of the circuit breaker box, the door locks, and the location of a first aid kit are important to find after the children are left in your care. T or F?

3. Asking to learn the location of the security alarm, a fire extinguisher and smoke alarm will assure the family that you are responsible and will help you prepare for an emergency. T or F?

4. Heat a bottle of milk in the microwave to get the most even results. T or F?

5. An empty toilet paper roll is a good device for measuring toys in order to avoid choking hazards. T or F?

6. When a baby is crying, it's best to leave the baby alone, and let them cry it out. T or F?

7. Yelling and scream louder than a child having a temper tantrum will get him to stop. T or F?

8. It is never O.K. to hit or shake a baby or child. T or F?

9. When children challenge your authority or argue with you, giving them choices is often an effective strategy. T or F?

10. Staying close to the children you are caring for is important, even if you are only hired for a short time. T or F?

11. It's your right to invite a friend over to the house when you are babysitting. T or F?

What Would You Do?

1. Carlos, the sitter, is playing hot wheels with Michael when Crystal yells that something is burning in her bedroom. What should Carlos do?
2. Courtney is babysitting with the Pulaski twins when the next door neighbor rings the doorbell. The neighbor didn't realize the Pulaskis had a sitter. She was hoping she could leave her daughters Margo and Carmen for an hour with Mrs. Pulaski. She asks Courtney to watch her daughters along with the twins. She says she'll pay her a little extra. What should Courtney do?
3. James watched the Allen's children twice last week. Mr. Allen said he'd pay him on Wednesday. It's Friday and James hasn't heard from him. What should he do?
4. Monica told the Sterns she would watch the children on Saturday night. On Thursday her two of her friends invite her to go to a concert on Saturday. What should she do?

Answer key to true and false quiz.

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. False
8. True
9. True
10. True
11. False

Temporary Child Care Checklist

Family

Mother's name:

Father's name:

Children's Names and Ages

Phone Numbers and Addresses

Address:

Family phone:

Parent location and phone:

Parent cell phone:

Neighbor's phone:

Family doctor:

Poison Control phone (800-942-5969)

Police/Fire emergency phone if not 911

Phone Answering Preference

Monitor answering machine.

Answer all incoming calls.

Parent Return Time

Home Tour

Location of first aid kit:

Security alarm:

Location of fire extinguisher:

Food

Meals and snacks for kids?

Special instructions:

Children's Medications

Bedtime Routines

Times:

Routines:

Pets

Name:

Special Instructions:

Television/Computer Rules

Restrictions on TV viewing:

Restrictions on computer videogame use:

Other Instructions

Resources

Barkin, Carol et. al. **The New Complete Babysitter's Handbook.** (Clarion Books, 1995).

Green, Caroline, **The Babysitter's Handbook** Dorling Kindersley Publishing, 2001.

Guleresian, Mary. **The Ultimate Sitter's Survival Guide.** Family Publishers, 1999.

Dayee, Fraqnces S. **Babysitting (revised edition).** Franklin Watts Publishers, 2000.

Websites

www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/babysitting

The University of Illinois maintains this site, "A Guide to the Business of Babysitting. Written for teenagers 14-19, it includes an ages and stages section as well as help on making a babysitting flyer online. Also in Spanish.

www.ci.mesa.az.us/police/babysit.htm

Warns that if the family is unfamiliar, ask who recommended you. Advises not to advertise in supermarkets, community bulletin boards, drug stores etc.