

Tool Box Tip #1 CHOOSING A BABYSITTER FOR YOUR CHILD

- **Interview all potential babysitters:**
 - Ask the babysitter's age. You may want to hire an older teen to watch young children.
 - Ask about the babysitter's past experience in caring for children and ask for references.
 - Ask what interests they have (sports, reading).
 - Ask why they are interested in babysitting?
 - Ask what activities they enjoy doing with children?
 - Ask if they taken the Red Cross baby-sitter's course?
 - Ask if they are aware that babies and young children should **NEVER** be shaken?
 - Ask if they know that babies should sleep on their back in their crib with nothing in it? (safe sleep environment)
- **Invite the babysitter to your house to:**
 - Give you an opportunity to observe them interacting with your children, and to show the babysitter around your home.
 - Discuss your views on discipline and child care. Make sure they understand appropriate forms of discipline.
 - Discuss the household rules and tell them how you expect your child to be treated.
 - Make sure they understand your rules on visitors, bed times, snacks, etc.
 - Show them where you will leave important telephone numbers (your contact number, a trusted neighbor, nearby relatives, doctor, fire, police) in case an emergency should arise.
 - Make sure they know it is all right to call you if there is a need
 - Be sure they know about any special medical concerns (example: allergies to food, animals, bee stings, etc.)
- **Talk to your children about the babysitter (before and after):**
 - Make sure they were comfortable with the babysitter.
 - Listen and respond to concerns your children may have.
 - Listen to your children and trust what they tell you.

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Child Care

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What Parents Should Expect From Providers

- Ongoing communication, open access to the home/center, frequent updates on your child's progress.
- Loving care, responsiveness, stimulation, and attention to building your child's self-esteem.
- A safe and healthy environment.
- Honesty. Caregivers should share information about problems or accidents. They should pay income taxes and meet all legal requirements.
- Acceptance of your wishes on matters such as discipline, seat belt/car seat usage, TV watching, food, toilet training, smoking, etc.
- Advance notice of changes, such as in hours or costs. You should have between a month and six weeks notice if a caregiver can no longer care for your child.
- Support for your family. Caregivers should not be critical of your family's lifestyle or values and should not be involved in family disputes. They should respect your religious beliefs and cultural background.
- Acceptance of you as the most important person in your child's life. Advice should be offered in a non-critical way.
- Assurance that everyone in contact with your child is trustworthy, properly trained, and continuously supervised-includes caregivers' friends/relatives, custodial help/transportation workers, and visitors.
- No surprises. Your child-care provider shouldn't suddenly announce that her teenage daughter will be watching your children three afternoons per week, nor should a favorite day-care teacher disappear without explanation.

What Providers Should Expect From Parents

- Open communication. You should clearly explain your wishes and provide information on problems, or changes at home, and about your child's routine, activities, and preferences.
- Agreement on terms and arrangements (fees, hours, etc.) in writing.
- Honesty and trust. Show your trust by asking questions and not jumping to conclusions when you have a concern.
- Advance notice. Provide a month to six weeks notice of changes in your child-care plans.
- Consistency. Pick up your child on time and follow through on agreements. If you are to supply diapers or other items, bring them before they are needed.
- Healthy children. Agree in advance about when you can and cannot bring a sick child.
- Payment on time. Your caregiver provides for his/her family with this income.
- Respect your caregiver as a professional. Taking care of children is his/her profession and a demanding job. Value your caregiver because he or she is an important person in your child's life.
- Understanding and support for your child's feelings toward his/her caregiver. A child who spends hours with a caregiver should love that person, but does not lessen how your child feels about you.
- No surprises. Caregivers don't like surprises any more than parents do. Caregivers should know ahead of time about changes in your child-care needs and about your concerns.

Other information can be located at <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/brochure.asp>
Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) Family Enrichment Network - Phone 723-8313 ext: 829
<http://www.familyenrichment.cc/ccrr/child-care-referrals.aspx>

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