

# Staying safe with a Babysitter



Make sure your child's sitter knows how to prevent injuries and what to do in an emergency.

Your child's safety is the most important thing to think about when you are choosing a babysitter. Injuries are more likely to happen if the babysitter does not have much experience or does not know your child or your home.

Make sure that your child's babysitter knows:

- how to keep your child safe from injuries
- what to do in an emergency

## Safety check

### For safety's sake

- Do not ask a babysitter to bathe a baby under age 1.
- If your child will need medicine while you are out, show the babysitter how much medicine to give and how to give it.
- Tell your babysitter that you need him or her to pay attention to your children at all times. He or she can wait to clean up until after the children have gone to bed.

- ✓ Leave the babysitter a telephone number where you can be reached. If you will be hard to reach, leave the number of a relative or neighbour.
- ✓ Keep emergency numbers near the telephone (police, ambulance, fire department, poison control centre).
- ✓ Show the babysitter where to find the fire extinguisher and how to use it.
- ✓ Show the babysitter where to find your first aid kit and flashlight.

*For more information, turn over this page*

# *The facts on* Babysitting safety

## **Choosing a babysitter**

Ask other parents for names of good babysitters. Your local schools or religious organizations may know some responsible young people who want to babysit. Seniors may also be interested.

Interview babysitters before you hire them.

Here are some questions to ask:

- **Experience.** How much babysitting has he or she done? Has the babysitter cared for other children the same age as your child?
- **Training.** Has the sitter taken a babysitter course or first aid course?
- **References.** Ask for the names and phone numbers of other families who have hired the babysitter. Call these families to find out if they were happy with him or her.

For the first visit, ask the babysitter to arrive at least 30 minutes before you have to leave. This will give your children time to get comfortable with the babysitter. Give him or her a tour of your home. Explain the important safety rules in your home.

## **Show the sitter:**

- where to find light switches, telephone, fire extinguisher, flashlight, first aid supplies
- how to handle telephone calls or visitors
- how to lock outside doors
- how to use appliances or equipment, such as the microwave, stove, heating controls, answering machine

## **Tell the sitter:**

- if your child has any allergies or a recent illness that could affect how he or she behaves
- how to help your child in the bathroom and when getting ready for bed
- what, how much, and when to feed each child

## **Remind the sitter to:**

- supervise your child at all times while he or she is awake, especially in the kitchen and bathroom
- check your sleeping child often
- use the telephone only when necessary, and keep calls short
- keep the radio or television low enough so that he or she can still hear your child

## **The sitter should also know:**

- what to do if a child is hurt or gets sick
- what to do if there is a fire
- how to reach you
- when you will come home
- your rules about having friends over

## **Help the sitter get to know your child**

To keep your child safe, a babysitter needs to know what your child can do. For example, can your baby sit up without help or eat solid foods yet? Can your toddler get up and down the stairs safely? Can your preschooler use the toilet without help? Tell the sitter what your child can do.