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By Jane Wells



Babysitting — The Inflation Fighter

THE ULTIMATE TRICKLE DOWN EFFECT

The price of everything is going up.

Except babysitting.

Babysitting rates have fallen three percent in a year to \$11.55 an hour, according to [Sittercity](#). I would point out that's still higher than the minimum wage earned while flipping burgers.

Still, it's a sign of the trickle-down theory in this economy. Parents who have enough money to go out for the night may not have as much money as they used to, and maybe they won't go out if the sitter's too expensive. At the same time, there may be a glut of babysitters, as people out of work fall back on their teenage profession.

Sittercity says the cheapest babysitter rates in the country are in Mesa, Arizona, outside Phoenix. Didn't think anyone in that retirement area was young enough to have babies...

Perhaps that's why the 5,000 babysitters there can be had for less than the price of an Early Bird Special.

Sittercity has a rate calculator on its website which helps you determine what you should be paying in your area. After Mesa, the second cheapest babysitters can be found in Cleveland (\$10.31/hr), Ft. Worth (\$10.56/hr), Orlando (\$10.60/hr — in the shadow of Disney World!), and St. Paul (\$10.87).

A friend in the Bay Area is about to have a baby. The site's rate calculator says she should expect to pay \$12.75/hr for a babysitter. Well, she's already paying \$22 per HALF hour for a dog walker, so the baby's a steal.

Seeking the baby bottle as half full, maybe the babysitting biz suffering from a case of economic diaper rash is a sign we've hit...bottom. I mean, where do you go from here? What sector has yet to see a downturn?

Next you'll tell me Girl Scout [cookie sales have been crumbling](#). Oh. Wait.