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By Corrie Pikul

8 Hidden Holiday Costs to Watch Out For

Do you feel like there's a hole in the bottom of your wallet? Here's where your money's going - and how you can hold onto it.

An Available Babysitter

It can be next to impossible to find a free sitter on a Saturday night in December—some have been booked since August, says Mary Schwartz, director of public relations for [Sittercity.com](http://www.sittercity.com). As all parents forced to sit home last December 31 know, New Year's Eve is hands down the most difficult time of year to find someone to watch your children, and even if you do score help, you should expect to pay a 50 to 100 percent increase over your normal rate (Sittercity.com's [babysitting rate calculator](#) can help you figure out the average hourly rates in your area). One way to bring this cost down would be to organize a babysitter share, which involves hiring one sitter for multiple families. Parents who share a sitter usually pay about 20 to 35 percent less than individuals, says Schwartz. "So if you and the other families typically pay \$12 an hour, you could reduce this down to \$8.40 each, and the sitter will still make \$16.80," says Schwartz. She adds that these types of arrangements work best under the following conditions: when there's one sitter for no more than two infants or four children, the kids are around the same ages, the parents agree to return home around the same time, and the families share the same basic disciplinary beliefs (i.e., in regards to time-outs, spanking, etc.).

Read more: <http://www.oprah.com/money/8-Hidden-Holiday-Costs-to-Watch-Out-For/7#ixzz1gLwxc6lS>