



Tuesday, February 22, 2011

By Monica Malpass

Parenting: Finding a great babysitter

Finding a great sitter is no easy task.

Parenting: Finding a great babysitter

You should start by asking family, friends and co-workers for some names. You can also go on a website like Sittercity.com for free for one week to get names and read a description. The advantage here is that potential babysitters have been screened with a background check.

Next you should make a list of your favorite candidates and do an informal phone interview with each one. How much experience do they have? How much education? What age children have they cared for? Have they had first aid training or a babysitter course? Can you get references?

Pick your favorite 3 or 4 and meet them in person at your home with your children. Watch how they interact, if they have high energy, are polite, clean-cut and enthusiastic.

It's a job interview for them, so they should take it seriously.

I liked one person who came highly recommended, but when she met my young babies, I thought she was too careless in the way she picked them up. If she's not gentle with me standing there, you can imagine when you're not home. It's not worth worrying about, so I didn't hire her.

When you've picked your favorite, give their references a call just to reassure yourself. If they get a glowing recommendation, they're in!

Red Cross Coordinator of Health and Safety June Snelling has these tips:

- Give them a tour of your home.
- You should leave information on how you can be reached, if for some reason, you can't be reached, who the next emergency contact should be.
- Anything that is hazardous in your home, such as stairways.

- Are there baby gates that need to be in place?

Plus, write down the basic routines your children are used to: mealtime, naptime, bath time, play time.

I suggest making it a short babysitting job the first time to see how it goes. Then ask the sitter and ask your kids what they thought.

Also things will go smoother if you set ground rules for the babysitter. Can she eat your food, use your computer/phone, have friends over? Do you also need him or her to do small chores while the little ones are sleeping?

Finally, make sure you agree on price. What's the going rate for a babysitter? Start with a baseline rate of about \$8 an hour for anyone over 16 years old.

Then consider 3 other factors.

- It depends on a few things - where you live, city or suburbs?
- How many children they'll be caring for and the kids ages?
- What other chores you need them to do or if they'll be working odd hours.

That puts me at between \$11 and \$12 an hour.

[Read more Parenting Perspective blogs by visiting the Parenting Channel on 6abc.com.](#)

(Copyright ©2011 WPVI-TV/DT. All Rights Reserved.)