Teen Babysitter Tips

Taking on the responsibility of young children can be frightening to a teenager. However, teens can be capable and confident babysitters when they are properly prepared for the experience. They should get to know the parents and children, find out what's expected of them

As a babysitter, you can never let down your guard. You must prove yourself to be responsible for all of the children that parents leave in your care. One mistake, or one instance of nodding off to sleep can cost those children their lives. Before you take a babysitting job, meet the parents, and find out what they expect of you.

Safety

The most important part of babysitting is keeping the kids safe. Remember to have important phone numbers handy, like 000, the poison control number, the children's doctor, never open the door to visitors you do not know. Do not tell callers you are the babysitter or that the parents are not home. Ideally, have an adult, such as your own parents, available nearby who you could call for help.

Watch at All Times

Never leave a child unattended, whether in the kitchen, bathroom, or any other room in the house. Many children have drowned because they were left in a bathtub for just a few seconds while a babysitter went to answer the phone. When small children are involved, tragedy can strike quickly. Keep your eye on them at all times.

Fire Safety

Have the parents take you on a walkthrough of the house. Familiarise yourself with all fire escape routes. Remember it's not the flames that necessarily kill - it's the smoke. In the event of a fire, first make sure everyone has made it out of the house safely. Then go next door and call 000.

Job Specifics

Be sure to specify before babysitting whether the parents or the babysitter are expected to provide transportation to and from the job, as well as if the babysitting will occur at the children's or the babysitter's house. It is also important to agree on beginning and ending times. Also be sure to agree to any duties you are expected to perform besides child care, such as cleaning or doing dishes.

Special Needs

Knowing beforehand if children have allergies, need a special diet, take medication, or have mental or physical limitations is vital. Ask parents to put special needs in writing to ensure that you have all the information you need at your fingertips.

Age Appropriate Activities

Once you know the ages of the kids you are babysitting, take a few minutes to decide what special skills or knowledge you will need. For example, familiarise yourself with toddler choking hazards, learn how to change a diaper, and think of games kids could safely enjoy. Children of all ages enjoy being outdoors, but be sure to ask permission from the parents as to where they are allowed to go.

Setting Boundaries

Children will often try to get away with things they might not be allowed to do when their parents are home. Remember that even though you are young, you have been hired to enforce the parents' rules. Make sure you get clear rules from the parents about things like snacks, TV time, bed and nap times, and friends visiting. It can also be very helpful to have the parents outline these rules in front of the children.