

## Babysitting Tips for Parents

Parents often rely on a babysitter's services to help manage busy work and social schedules. To ensure your children's safety, it's your responsibility to not only find a capable and responsible caregiver, but also provide them with the information needed to handle the job.

**The following are several tips to consider:**

### Selecting a Babysitter

- Ask for sitter referrals from family, friends and neighbors.
- Interview several candidates before making your decision. Make sure the sitter is at least 13 years old and understands what to do in an emergency. Confirm that they have had training in first aid and know infant and child CPR. Ask for references and follow-up on them.
- Before babysitting alone, ask the sitter to spend time with your children and learn their routines.

### Communicating Pertinent Information

- Provide a tour of your house. Point out safety devices such as baby gates, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide detectors, etc. Show how to work the door and window locks and how to turn on outside lights. Make sure the sitter knows planned fire escape routes (including any problem areas) and understands where emergency supplies are located including a first aid chart, first aid supplies, and a flashlight.
- Instruct the sitter to never open the door for strangers or identify him/herself (on the phone or in person) as a caregiver. Ask that all doors be locked and outside lights remain on.

- Write down and discuss pertinent information about you, your children and the situation, including:
  - Your name, home address and phone numbers.
  - Where you are, when you will return, and how to reach you.
  - Emergency telephone numbers including police, fire/rescue, poison control center, hospital, doctor, and contact person if you can't be reached. Post this information at every phone.
  - Complete details about each child (i.e., full name, age, height, weight, nap bedtime, allergies and special instructions for medications including doses, instructions and schedule)
- Identify the location of each phone and talk about your usage policy.
- Discuss house rules and routines, including bedtime practices, discipline philosophy, and acceptable and unacceptable TV programs and foods. Identify which rooms are off limits to children. Give instructions regarding play areas and use of protective gear for bikes, skateboards, etc.
- Stress the importance of constant supervision.
- Upon your return, ask for details regarding the time you were away, including any problems or issues.

*Source: American Academy of Pediatrics and National SAFE Kids Campaign.*

Check out our course list online for a variety of safety trainings provided across the state at

[www.ndsc.org](http://www.ndsc.org)

*The North Dakota Safety Council is a private non-profit organization supported through grants, donations, memberships and training.*

