Business with the Babysitter

Hiring a babysitter to care for your child over a short period of time is common practice. A trustworthy babysitter allows parents and guardians more flexibility to run errands, go on a date, and be more involved in the community. Whether your babysitter is a teenager new to the business or an experienced adult, it is important to leave your care provider with the information necessary to respond to an emergency, meet each child’s unique needs, and maintain your family’s schedule.

General Information
● Parent/guardian name & telephone numbers (home, work, and cell)
● Destination plan (where you’re going, expected time of return, etc.)
● Neighbor’s name & telephone number
● Emergency contact name & telephone number (a reliable and accessible adult who can assist if parent cannot be reached)
● Emergency numbers (911, medical personnel, poison control, etc.)
● Home address
● Does your babysitter have a phone to make a call? If your home doesn’t have a landline, consider leaving a cell phone home with the care provider.

Household Information
● Emergency plan (fire exits, tornado shelter, location of emergency supplies, disaster communication plan, etc.)
● Supplies location (first aid kit, flashlight, plunger, broom, etc.)
● Security tools (locks, alarms, keys, etc.)
● Appliances (how/what to use, fuse box location, etc.)
● Pets (responsibilities, special needs, etc.)

Children’s Information
● Health needs (medicine, allergies, etc.)
● Food options (age-appropriate options, preparation preferences, etc.)
● Play and learning activities (technology limits, trusted playmates, safe areas outdoors/indoors, homework routine, etc.)
● Sleep & other routines (time, rituals, security toy/blanket, etc.)
● Discipline (age-appropriate expectations, house rules, preferred behavior and disciplinary action, etc.)

Take time to discuss valuable information face-to-face with your babysitter. Leave a written document outlining the information for reference while you are out.
Qualities of Strong Families

Appreciation and Affection
- Caring for each other
- Friendship
- Respect for individuality
- Playfulness
- Humor

Commitment
- Trust
- Honesty
- Dependability
- Faithfulness
- Sharing

Positive Communication
- Giving compliments
- Sharing feelings
- Avoid blaming
- Being able to compromise
- Agreeing to disagree

Enjoyable Time Together
- Lots of quality time
- Good things take time
- Enjoying each other’s company
- Simple good times
- Sharing fun times

Spiritual Well-being
- Hope
- Faith
- Compassion
- Shared ethical values
- Oneness with humankind

Effective Stress and Crisis Management
- Are adaptable
- See crises as challenges and opportunities
- Grow through crises together
- Open to change
- Bounce back from stress and crisis

Tips to Help Individuals Break Unhealthy Habits

A Positive, Optimistic Perspective: Greater overall optimism and positivity contribute to an individual's health. Learning to be the positive voice inside of your head, instead of the negative one, can help you move beyond negative thinking.

Mindfulness: Rather than focusing on bad experiences from the past or stressors and concerns about the future, being mindful allows a person to put such thoughts aside and focus on the current moment. This increased mindfulness directly relates to an individual's greater well-being.

Healthy Stress Management: Well-adjusted individuals use positive, rather than destructive, forms of stress management. Healthy ways to manage stress include physical exercise, relaxation, or breathing techniques, and talking through issues with a friend or partner.

Sources: National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families; American Red Cross Babysitter’s Training Handbook; Family Treasures: Creating Strong Families

By John DeFrain, Kathleen Lodl, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

When people across the country and around the world describe the qualities that make their family strong, these are some of the things they say...

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