



M E M B E R ' S   G U I D E

# Babysitting Beginnings



PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY



College of Agricultural Sciences  
Cooperative Extension

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# Session 1: Babysitting Responsibilities

Babysitting is a very important job. Wherever there are families with young children, babysitters will be needed. Parents place the children they love in the babysitter's care, and they expect the best! This book will help you learn the skills you need to be a responsible sitter. Remember, you must like to be around young children to be a good babysitter!

## What Will I Learn?

- How to solve problems
- How to keep children safe and happy while you babysit
- How to talk to parents and children
- How to be better prepared as a future parent
- How to make career choices—you may become interested in being a camp counselor, a full-time childcare provider, or an elementary school teacher
- How to manage your money and reach goals

## What Can I Expect?

First impressions are important! The first time you babysit, you should get to know the parents and children. If you are well prepared, the parents will trust you, and you will have a happier and safer time with the children.

You are babysitting to take care of the children and to keep them safe until the parents return. You are selling the service of “caring” for the children, and that service includes the way you feel and the way you act.

Discuss with the parents if they have any expectations about your handling other household chores. Remember that you should clean up anything you use with the child—for example, you should pick up toys and clothes and wash dishes after a meal or snack you serve the child.

Be prepared to handle emergencies that may occur. You'll learn more about this in a later session.

You should have permission of your own parent/guardian before agreeing to babysit.



As a sitter,  
remember. . .

- You are in charge, but you are not the parent.
- You must be responsible.
- You must like children.
- Babysitting is a business arrangement.
- You should be neat and clean.
- You should wear comfortable, washable clothes.
- You must be reliable.
- You should know how to follow instructions.
- You should never leave the children unattended.
- You should model safety practices.



# Session 1 Worksheet

Name:

Club/Group:

## Babysitters Do

Three of my favorite memories from early childhood were:

1.

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2.

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3.

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## Babysitters Share (Date and have an adult initial when complete.)

	Date	Adult Initial
Share with your group or a friend why these were your favorite memories.		
Share past babysitting experiences (if any in your group already babysit). What characteristics do you think a babysitter needs? Share what you think they are.		

## Babysitters in Action (Date and have an adult initial when complete.)

	Date	Adult Initial
Role play a situation in which you are the babysitter and a friend is the parent. You have just arrived and are discussing expectations and rules.		

# Session 2: The Business of Babysitting



## Creative Job Hunting

Finding a babysitting job is the first challenge you will face. The following tips can help you get started.

- Before you start earning money as a babysitter, you might consider *volunteering to gain experience*. This is a great way to practice before you start your babysitting career. Go to a local church, temple, or other community group with young families and ask if they need babysitting help. The experience will be great and you may get some new babysitting jobs.
- *Word of mouth* is probably the best way to find babysitting jobs. Tell family and friends who have young children that you are willing to care for them. Younger siblings and relatives can give you a great start to babysitting. You may start out by watching children while the parents are at home. You have just as much responsibility when the parents are home in another room as you would if they were away.
- *Make a business card* to leave with parents or family and friends. Make sure your parents/guardians approve of your advertising methods. Doing a good job with the children is the best advertising for future work.
- If you have friends who babysit, you might make yourself available to *substitute* for them.
- Check with *community activity and service groups* that have children's activities.
- Check with *local exercise and fitness centers* to see if they need child care workers while parents attend class.
- Do children need to be supervised while they *walk home or ride a bus from elementary school*? Offer your services for these after-school hours.
- Offer to watch an elementary-aged child *in your home for a few hours* after school. Make sure this arrangement is acceptable to your parents.
- *Team up with another sitter* to work for two families who might go out together.
- *Ask for a reference* from a family you've already babysat for. Specifically, find out if you can have another family call them for a recommendation about your skills.
- *Plan a party with other babysitters* for children; charge per hour or per child.

## Accepting a Job

When you accept a babysitting job, ask how you will get there. Make sure your parents know how you will get to and from the babysitting job.

Know something about the families you agree to babysit for. Don't babysit for strangers. Your parents should know the people or take the time to meet them before you go to a new home. For each family you babysat for during this project, complete the *Babysitting Information Form* on page 10.

## How Many is Too Many?

Although it might seem like a good idea to agree to sit several children at one time to make extra money, you should know how many children you can handle. The ages of the children also will determine how many you can safely take care of at once. Two toddlers are more difficult than two school-aged children. Also, you might need more experience before you babysit for infants. Finally, if the parents did not give you permission, don't keep extra friends or children from the neighborhood.

## Getting Paid

Know in advance what you will charge for babysitting. This can save possible embarrassment for you and the parents. You are doing a service for the parents and should expect to be paid an agreed-upon fee. Ask your friends what they are charging for babysitting, then say to parents, "The hourly rate in this area is. . . ." You also should consider the following:

- You might charge hourly fees, fees for more than two children, fees for late evenings or nights, and fees for doing extra chores. If you sit for more than one child, your fee should be higher. Don't be afraid to set your own "base fee," as long as it is reasonable.
- You may ask ahead of time for the payment to be in cash, not a check.
- Expect to be paid when the job is finished, upon the parents' return.
- If parents do not pay you at the end of the babysitting time, or if they have other problems about paying, you can decide not to babysit for them in the future.
- You may want to open up a bank account for the money you earn while babysitting. Plan how you will use your money.
- Keep a calendar to list the dates and hours that you will be babysitting. This will help you keep records and not overlap jobs.
- Complete the *Babysitting Information/Babysitting Record* on page 10 for each family you babysit.

## When You Arrive

When you first arrive at the house where you will be babysitting, talk to the parents and ask questions. The more information you have before the parents leave, the easier your job will be. Arrive at least 15 minutes early so you have plenty of time. It's also good to allow the children to become comfortable with you while their parents are still there. Make a good first impression when you meet the children. Smile, look them in the eye, kneel down to their level and say their names. Introduce yourself or remind them of your name if you babysat them before. Tell parents about other babysitting jobs you have had.

## Before the Parents Leave

- Ask about where these items are located:
  - Smoke alarms
  - Carbon monoxide detectors
  - Electrical fuse box
  - First-aid supplies
  - Flashlight
  - Needed medication
- Ask to be shown how to lock the doors and windows.
- Ask for instructions about how to work the telephone.
- Ask if there are any pets in the home and how to take care of them.

## Family Rules and Routines

Family rules are important to follow. Ask what rules will be in effect, for both you and the children, while you babysit. Talk about rules for each of these items:

### Telephone

Ask the parents how they would like their phone to be answered. If an answering machine is available, parents may want that to be used. Don't call your friends just to chat. Use the phone only for emergencies.

### Visitors

Ask if the parents are expecting any visitors or deliveries. Ask about rules if the children say they want to visit friends or have friends come over. Do not open the house door or let anyone you don't know into the house. Keep doors and windows locked. If you hear a suspicious noise or have an unexpected visitor who will not leave, call a neighbor or the police. Also, remember that your job is to take care of the children. Babysitting isn't a time for your boyfriend or girlfriend or friend to visit.

### Food

Parents may tell you what snacks or beverages are available to you and the children, but don't raid the refrigerator. You may want to bring along some snacks for yourself to enjoy after the children have gone to bed.

## Television /Computer/ Video Games

How long can the children watch? Ask what types of programs or specific programs are O.K. to watch. What channels are off-limits? Are there videos that the children can watch? Can the children play video games or computer games? If they can, how long is long enough? After the parents have left, be firm in turning off and shutting down when you are supposed to.

Don't watch programs of interest to you when the children are still up. Stay away from frightening programs such as monster and ghost movies. The television is not the babysitter! Do some of the creative activities in this project, play a game, make up a rhyme, or read a story with the children.

## Bedtime

What time? Bathing? Check on sleeping children several times throughout the evening. If the parents are going to be home very late, find out if there are sleeping arrangements for you.

## Behavior

Ask how the parent wants you to handle misbehavior. Remember to stay calm. Speaking in a slow, soft manner may calm down children who are yelling or fighting.

## When the Parents Return

Give the parents a report of what happened while they were gone. Tell about any accidents, phone calls, problems, or unusual events. If something went wrong or the children misbehaved, don't be afraid to tell the parent.

If the parents are late in returning, call your parents to let them know you are still on the job.

If the parents agreed to take you home, be alert for any signs that they are not able to drive safely, especially because of alcohol. If you suspect a problem, politely call your parents to make other arrangements to get home.

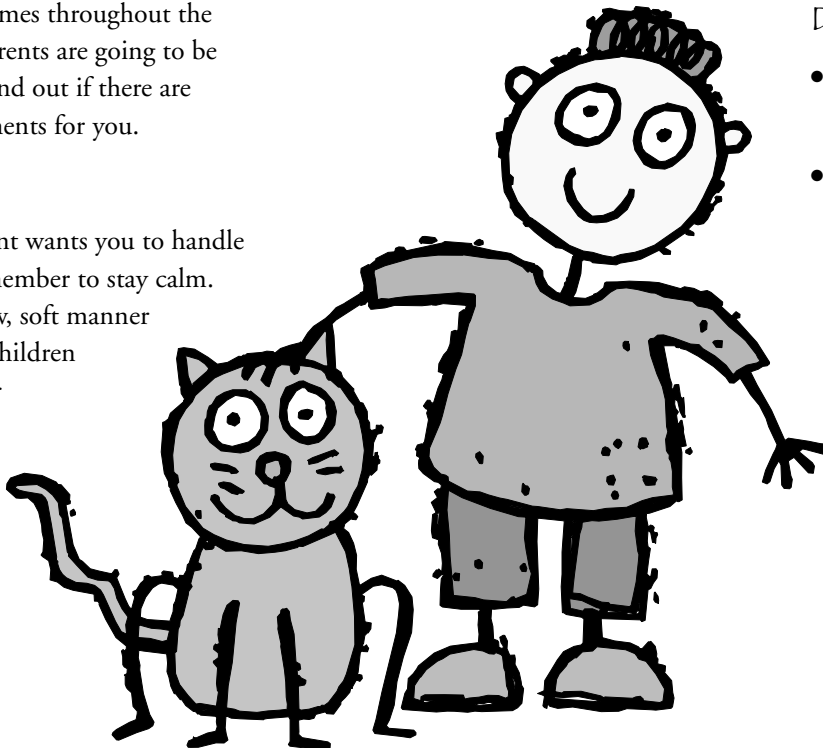
## Babysitting Dos and Don'ts

### Do:

- Finish studying before babysitting.
- Be on time.
- Know the families before you agree to babysit.
- Snack only if food is offered by the parent.
- Watch television only if the children are sleeping. Make sure the volume is turned down so you can hear the children.
- Stay with the children at all times.
- Remember what the parents ask you to do—take notes to remember special instructions.
- Be cold- and illness-free when you babysit.

### Don't:

- Try to combine a date with a sitting job.
- Snoop through personal items in the house.



## Session 2 Worksheet

Name:

Club/Group:

### Babysitters Do (Date and have an adult initial when complete.)

Check off the activities you did at home or with your babysitter's group.

	Date	Adult Initial
Role play a new family who wants to hire a babysitter.		
Complete the <i>Babysitting Information/Babysitting Record Form</i> for a family where you babysit. If you aren't babysitting yet, complete with a parent or guardian to practice. This is where you can keep track of information about your experiences, including how much you were paid.		
Begin a portfolio of your babysitting work. A portfolio is a collection of notes, pictures, journal entries, drawings, photographs, and/or projects that relate to children you care for. You can use big envelopes, a scrapbook, manila folders, or a box in which to store your portfolio items. Bring this to all of your babysitting sessions. You may want to add to it after each meeting.		
Complete the <i>My Family Rules</i> worksheet on page 12. What rules does your family have?		
Practice making a time schedule for a babysitting job. Use the <i>Babysitting Time Planner</i> on page 9 to help you.		
Make a sample business card for your babysitting services.		

### Babysitters Share (Date and have an adult initial when complete.)

	Date	Adult Initial
Share with the group or a friend the rules in your family and why you have them.		
Discuss your business card with an adult. Check to see that all important information (name, age, fee, important characteristics you offer) is included.		

### Babysitters in Action (Date and have an adult initial when complete.)

	Date	Adult Initial
Use the <i>Babysitting Information/Babysitting Record Form</i> when you babysit. Complete a <i>Babysitting Time Planner</i> for your next babysitting job.		





# Babysitting Time Planner

Name:

Club/Group:

## Activities I want to do with the children:

Activity

How long will it take?

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## Notes about my babysitting job:

Things to tell parents

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Problems I had

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# Babysitting Information Form/Babysitting Record (Make a copy for each new family.)

Name:

Club/Group:

Use a copy of this form for each family you babysit for. Don't write on this copy in your project book. Do not submit these records for exhibit or judging. You can put this in your journal or portfolio. It is an easy way to keep track of past jobs and possible future jobs.

Family's name:

Children's name(s) and ages:

Where parents can be reached (name/location):

Telephone/cell phone/pager number (if available):

Address/Directions to house:

Length of Assignment:

Time parents expect to return:

House rules:

Who can visit?

How long can they stay?

Who can the children visit?

What are the television rules?

When is bedtime?

What is the bedtime routine?

Where are the following located?

Telephone:

Thermostat:

Flashlight:

Emergency kit:

What are the following emergency numbers? Relative or friends:

Fire department:

Police:

Are there specific instructions (medicine, etc.)?

Are there other chores to complete?


What food is allowed?

For the children:

For the babysitter:

Travel arrangements to and from babysitting:

Payment received:



# My Family Rules

Name:

Club/Group:

Think about the rules or traditions you have in your family. Write a rule *if you have one* in each of the categories. Write why you think the rule is important or needed. (Note: You may not have rules in your family for all of these categories.)

About bedtime :

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About television:

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About visitors:

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About friends:

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About homework:

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About social events:

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Other rules:

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# Session 3: Understanding Children

You may babysit children of different ages for different families. Be prepared to take care of children from infancy through school age. Babies have very different needs from older children and need special care. Toddlers like to be entertained and require lots of energy. Preschoolers love games and activities. School-aged children still need your attention and guidance, but are more independent. This section discusses what to expect from children at different ages.

## Ages and Stages of Children

### Infant (Birth to 1 Year):

- crying can mean hunger, diapers need a change, loneliness, etc.
- never leave baby alone on dressing table
- know how to change diapers, bathe, and feed infants
- handle baby carefully, supporting head
- be careful not to “toss” baby up in the air
- babies need constant attention: warm support, nourishment, and play
- babies like to be with other people

*Because infants grow and change so rapidly, their needs and wants change often throughout the first 18 months.*

More information on what infants are like can be found on the 4-H Web site, <http://pa4h.cas.psu.edu>. Click on “curriculum resources” to find the “babysitting” button.

### Toddler (1 to 3 Years):

- snacks frequently
- gets into everything
- says “no!” often
- toilet training usually taking place
- wants to do his/her own thing
- constant attention needed
- may like cuddling
- may initiate play
- hide and seek, guessing games are successful
- often seems to be not listening
- can often get what you want done without making a big effort out of it
- begins to use some words such as “tata” or “bye-bye”



### Preschooler (3 to 6 Years):

- might say “why” often
- imaginary playmates common
- likes to think he/she is in charge
- shouldn't be left alone
- needs comforting or distraction when parent leaves
- sleeps less
- is more independent
- often doesn't want to go to bed
- may have bedtime ritual
- likes quiet activities before bed
- should be checked every 1/2 hour
- may not be completely toilet trained
- may have bad dreams or fears and need comfort until asleep or back to sleep
- can make a game of tasks that need to be done

## Dealing with Children's Behavior

### School-Aged Child (6 to 10 Years):

- usually the age with the greatest challenge
- developing many interests
- might argue that something's "not fair!" often
- wants to be responsible
- enjoys activities such as making popcorn, games, crafts
- likes to talk about his/her interests
- may not want a babysitter
- may be jealous of time and attention given younger children
- needs definite plans for amusement

### All Ages:

- show love and acceptance
- develop self-confidence by praising and making children feel useful and important
- understand things from their point of view
- make each child feel special



Knowing what children are like at different ages makes behavior problems easier to understand and deal with. The best strategy is to avoid behavior problems before they start!

*Provide a variety of things to do.* Understand what the child is like at various ages. Just before you go to your job, read about the age of the child you will be caring for.

*Expect good behavior.* Request and suggest instead of order and command. We all feel the same way; *we respond better to positive suggestions than to negative ones.* For example, you might say, "Walk over here with me," instead of "Don't walk on the grass."

*Give an older child fair warning* before you do something. Be gentle but firm. Don't let the child talk you out of your decision. For example, you might say, "In a few minutes it will be time to put away your truck and go with me to the store," or "As soon as this TV show is finished, it will be time to get ready for bed."

*Enforce the rules of the parents' house.* Children may test a new babysitter to find out what rules will be enforced. Knowing familiar rules is a form of security for the child. You can't make up your own.

*Temper tantrums* are a temporary loss of control. Most children have them occasionally. Stay calm. A temper tantrum is a normal childhood experience. Don't let your temper flare. Don't walk off and leave the child. The best thing to do may be to let the child cry

or give a reassuring hug. Don't refer back to the tantrum unless the child brings it up. Tell the parent about any temper tantrums and how you responded.

*Discipline* is helping the child learn self-control. It is not punishment. Punishment is physically, emotionally, or verbally hurting a child.

*Never spank or hit a child.* Try to discipline by using consequences. For example, you might say: "We'll have to put your tricycle away if you continue to bump into people." Of course, you must follow through. Toddlers might need just a time-out, or a few minutes by themselves to quiet down. A general rule is one minute for each year of age. Often you can avoid a discipline situation by planning ahead. If you see only one cupcake left and two children, cut it into two pieces or don't offer it.

*Bedtime* does not have to be a difficult time for a babysitter. Avoid problems by letting the children know 15 to 30 minutes ahead of time that bedtime is approaching. Wind down with quiet activities such as quiet games, songs, or stories before bedtime. Excitable games can wake children up and make it difficult for them to relax for bed. Snacks, if any, should be light, such as a cookie or fruit and a small glass of milk. If a child refuses to sleep, let him or her stay in bed and read or do a quiet activity.

Adapted with permission from *Babysitter's Program*. (1996). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Extension 4-H Youth and Family Development.



## Session 3 Worksheet

Name:

Club/Group:

### Babysitters Do (Date and have an adult initial when complete.)

Check off the activities you did at home or with your babysitter's group.

	Date	Adult Initial
Practiced changing a baby's (or doll's) diaper.		
Calculated how much it would cost to take care of a baby for one month.		
Discussed with my helper or a friend some activities I could do if I babysat children of different ages.		
Role-played with my helper or a friend how to get a child who doesn't want to turn off the television to go to bed.		

### Babysitters Share

Have you ever noticed that children are not all alike? Talk with a friend about the differences you notice among children you babysit, younger sisters or brothers, or other children that you know. Are their ages different? Write down some of the differences you discussed.

### Babysitters in Action

Write at least two new things you learned about children's behavior:

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How will what you learned about children's behavior help you when you babysit?

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# Session 4: Fun with Children



Play is a child's work. As a babysitter, you should play with the children you babysit and not just "watch" them. Play activities should not be too hard or too easy for the age of the child. Try books, fingerplays, making musical instruments, learning a song, or making playdough. For young children, the "making" and "doing" is the most important part of the activity. Don't worry about the end result!

This session includes some fun activities and information that help children grow and develop in different ways. More activities to do with children can be found on the 4-H Web site, <http://pa4h.cas.psu.edu>. Click on "curriculum resources" to find the "babysitting" button.

## Language and Reading with Children

Some children have had much more experience with stories and music than others. As a result, it's not possible to say that one book or song will always be preferred by a three-year-old and another by a five-year-old. When you select a book for a child, you need to know something about the child's interests. The following suggestions may help you:

*Children from one to two years old* usually prefer a story that is made up.

They especially like a story or song about themselves. It takes only a few simple ideas accompanied by actions to make a "story" for them. The story might go something like this: "Juan is a fine boy. He has brown eyes (point to them). He has curly brown hair (point). He likes to eat his cereal. . . ." Dressing, eating, and playing all make good ideas around which to build a story that a very young child enjoys. The story may be spoken or it may be "sung."

*Children from one year old on* like to look at picture books. The pictures should be large, and there should be only one or two pictures on a page. It is good if the pictures are of real objects that the child can recognize (a ball, a cat, a car).

*Young children* also like to turn the pages of a book. They sometimes like to tell stories that they make up about the pictures. Turning pages and talking are activities that children enjoy and an important part of having a story "read" to them.

*As children get older*, they like longer stories, but still are interested in familiar things: mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, brothers and sisters, animals, playthings, food, etc. They like to imagine parts of the story.

Children like to see the pictures in a book that is being read. They like to sit in the reader's lap and help hold the book. If you are reading the story to more than one child, have them sit in

front of you and hold the book in one hand with it facing the children. Read the story by looking at it sideways. This is not difficult to do with simple stories that you know well, but may take some practice for other stories. Children often like to talk about what is happening in the story before it is read or while you are reading. It's a good idea to stop and let them talk about their ideas. Hearing what they think and feel is more important than finishing the story.

Adapted with permission from *Babysitter's Program*. (1996). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Extension 4-H Youth and Family Development.

## Fingerplay Language Activities

### "Home Sweet Home"

- A nest is a home for a robin (cup hands to form a nest)
- A hive is a home for a bee (turn cupped hands over)
- A hole is a home for a rabbit (make a hole with hands)
- And a house is a home for me (make roof with peaked hands)

### "Quiet Cats"

- We are little pussy cats (use hands, crawl, or tip-toe)

## Music & Movement

- Walking round and round
- We have cushions on our feet
- (whisper) And never make a sound

### "Taller, Smaller"

- When I stretch up, I feel so tall
- When I bend down, I feel so small
- Taller, taller, taller, taller
- Smaller, smaller, smaller, smaller
- Into a tiny ball

### "The Apple Tree"

- Way up high in the apple tree (point up high)
- Two little apples smiling at me (make two circles with hands)
- I shook that tree as hard as I could (wrap hands around "trunk" and shake)
- Down came the apples and (two circle hands come down)
- Mmmm, they were good! (rub tummy)

### "I'm a Little Teapot"

- I'm a little teapot, short and stout
- Here is my handle, here is my spout
- When I get all steamed up, hear me shout
- "Tip me over and pour me out!"

### "The Itsy Bitsy Spider"

- The itsy bitsy spider climbed up the waterspout
- Down came the rain and washed the spider out
- Out came the sun and dried up all the rain
- And the itsy bitsy spider climbed up the spout again

To children, music means activity. The young child likes to "dance!" Preschool children like songs with actions. They usually like to play "Farmer in the Dell," "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush," and "Duck, Duck, Goose." By five or six, children like singing games with more complicated actions such as "In and Out the Window" and "Lobby Loo." When children are four, five, or six years old, they start to like to "just listen" to music.

### Making Musical Instruments or Toys

Children love to help make and use musical instruments. Children may have more interest in using and experimenting with instruments that they make. Some of the following examples are too hard for young children to make without help. You'll have to patiently help them and be satisfied if their results are less than perfect. You also can make these at home and bring them with you when you babysit.

### Drums

- Tape the top securely on an oatmeal box or a margarine container.
- Cut the ends off a large can, cover both ends with rubber inner tubing, and lace the tubing together; or use a plastic snap-on lid on each end.
- The end of any cylinder-shaped container can be covered with construction paper or fabric scraps. Try any surface that is available. Compare the differences in the sounds they make.
- Drumsticks can be your hands, spoons, pencils, dowels, or sticks. You may want to wrap one end of the dowel or stick with cloth, or tie cotton on it to make a different sound.

### Tambourines

- Remove corks from bottle caps. Flatten the caps and punch holes in them. Make sure there are no sharp edges. Tie caps to the edges of aluminum pie pans or paper plates.
- Put bottlecaps, buttons, or stones in an aluminum pie pan. Place another pie pan face down over it. Punch evenly spaced holes around the rim and lace together tightly.

### Shakers

- Use film containers, plastic eggs, baking powder cans, oatmeal boxes, or boxes with lids. Experiment with different sounds by putting dry beans, macaroni, rice, buttons, stones, etc., in them. Tape together securely. Little children like to put things in their mouths, so be sure they cannot get to the contents of the shaker.
- Staple paper plates together with something that rattles inside. Use fairly large objects, and place the staples very close together so the contents will not fall out. Place tape over the staples, or lace the edges with yarn after holes are punched. Attach tie strings for musical hats.

### Swish or Sandpaper Blocks

- Glue sandpaper, rough side out, to one side of two 2-inch-square, 1-inch-thick wooden blocks. Rub the sandpapered sides of the two blocks together for sound effects. Be sure the blocks are smooth and do not have splinters.



## Cymbals and Bells

- Make cymbals from jar lids, saucepan covers, or aluminum plates. A spool may be attached as a handle.
- Finger cymbals can be made by punching two holes in the center of two matching jar lids, large buttons, or bottle caps. Fold a fat rubber band in half and push each end through the holes. Put your thumb and forefinger through the loops and clack away. Sew small sleigh bells to elastic and make a wrist band of bells.

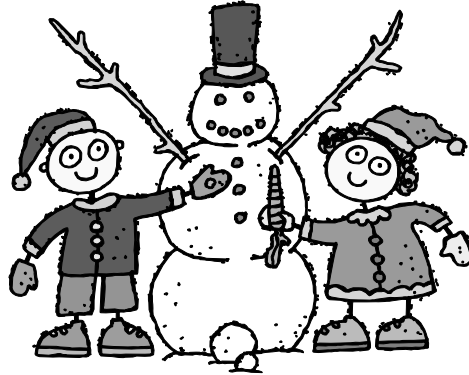
## Kazooos and Horns

- Tape waxed paper over one end of a cardboard tube (from paper towels or toilet paper). Hum into the open end with your mouth open a little. This may take a little practice. A different sound is made if you make three holes in the tube with a pencil. The waxed paper also can be held in place with a rubber band.
- Blow across the mouths of different-sized empty plastic soda bottles. Different sizes give different tones.

## Water Chimes

- Put water in eight glasses. Start with an almost full glass on the left, and end with a small amount of water in the eighth glass. The tone of the full glass will be deep and clear. Add or pour water from the other glasses until you have the eight musical notes of a scale. Tap the glasses gently with a spoon, a pencil, or your fingernail. If you want a short note, put your finger on the rim of the glass, and the sound will stop. Fill a number of glass containers with different amounts of water. Carefully striking the sides of the containers with different utensils will make them ring out with varying degrees of sound.

Reprinted with permission from: Good times with music and rhythm. (1989). Lagoni, L. S., D. H. Martin, et al. In: *Good Times With Child Care*, pp. 206–221. Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University Cooperative Extension and The National Network for Child Care (NNCC).



## Outdoor Play

Take the children you are caring for on a walk outside. As you walk, talk to the children about what you are seeing. Here are some ways you can do this:

- Look for different shapes and colors of leaves.
- Point out wildflowers. Discuss their fragrance, shape, and color.
- Listen to the different sounds in the outdoors.
- Notice the birds, and talk about the different kinds. Tell the children something about how they live, where they get their food, and other things of interest.
- Observe the sky: cloud formations, sunrises, sunsets, different colors, rainbows, and the stars at night.

You and the children will think of other things as you walk. Scavenger hunts are fun with older children.

## Creative Activities

### What is Creativity?

Creativity means expressing yourself in your own way. Children are naturally creative. They see the world through fresh, new eyes and then use what they see in original ways. One of the most rewarding parts of working with children is the chance to watch them create. They do it all the time, all by themselves. You can encourage the natural creativity that is already there!

Children display creativity in many ways, but especially while doing art, language, music, and fantasy activities. Children can express their ideas and feelings through their artwork, using crayons, paint, scissors, glue, play dough, and other craft materials. They also can express their ideas and feelings through language, either through stories they tell or creative “plays” and “pretend” games. Music is the expression of ideas and feelings using movement. It includes dancing, singing, playing instruments, and using the body to make movements such as leaping like a frog or exploring how many ways to make a circle with the body. Fantasy is expressing ideas and feelings by pretending. It can include playing “make-believe,” daydreaming, talking with imaginary companions, and reading fantasy books.

Your local library has lots of books of creative activities for children. Here are two you might want to try with your club or a friend.

## Accordion People

Cut strips of construction paper about 2" wide and 12" long. Demonstrate a fan/accordion fold. Let children try it with a strip of the paper. Encourage them to think of creative ways of making heads and feet to attach to each end of the folded strip to make a person. Stretching the accordion folds makes the person short or tall.

## Uncooked Play Dough

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups water (approximately)

Mix together the flour and salt. Add enough water to make a dough the consistency of stiff cookie dough. Color by adding food coloring to the water before mixing, or by kneading in dry tempera after mixing. The dry tempera gives deeper, more brilliant colors. The dough can be air dried or baked in a 225°F oven for 2 to 3 hours.

Reprinted with permission from: Good times being creative. (1989). Lagoni, L. S., D. H. Martin, et al. In: *Good Times With Child Care*, pp. 239–253. Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University Cooperative Extension and The National Network for Child Care (NNCC).



## Activities with Food

If you are going to make snacks or do any activities that require food, make sure the parents have given you permission. Ask if the child is allergic to any types of food. Then it's time to get started! Wash your hands and have the children wash theirs. A good way to know that you've washed long enough is to sing the "ABC" song while washing. When the song is over, your hands should be clean. Don't let children sample any food until it is ready to be served. This also can help prevent the spread of germs.

Children love to cook and participate in food activities. They also have short attention spans. Give them quick, simple jobs, with one instruction at a time. Repeat directions as often as needed. Never leave the children alone, and don't be upset with spills and messes—they're to be expected. The children also can help with clean-up.

Toddlers love to feed themselves; however, be careful about food becoming trapped in their small airways. Nutritionists give us the following advice:

- Check baked goods for nuts, which are the number one food-related choking hazard for children.
- Avoid hard or difficult-to-chew foods like raw carrots or other crunchy vegetables, hard candy, jelly beans, nuts, and lollipops. Spread thick and sticky peanut butter very thinly.
- Cut grapes into quarters and hot dogs into fine, lengthwise slices. Dice meats. Chop apples and firm fruits into very small pieces.

- Keep an eye on small children when they are eating. They might eat in a hurry and stuff too much food in their mouths, or not chew their food well.
- Feed children only when they are seated. Don't allow them to run or play with food while chewing.

Adapted from: *Nutrition and Your Child*. Baylor College of Medicine, USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center.

## Food Ideas for Children

The following recipes are quick, easy, and fun to make with children.

### Smiley Faces

You will need:

- Rice or popcorn cakes
- Peanut butter
- Bananas
- Plastic knife
- Raisins
- Napkin or plate

Spread peanut butter on a cake. Use two banana slices to form eyes. Shape a smiling mouth with raisins.

### Apple Smiles

You will need:

- Apples (washed)
- Peanut butter or cream cheese
- Miniature marshmallow
- Knife or apple slicer
- Plastic knife
- Napkin or plate

Wash apple, leaving peels on. Cut apples into quarters. Spread one quarter with peanut butter or cream cheese. Add 3 or 4 marshmallows near the skin side of the quarter, for teeth. Cover with another apple quarter so the sandwich looks like a smile.

# Toys

## Infants

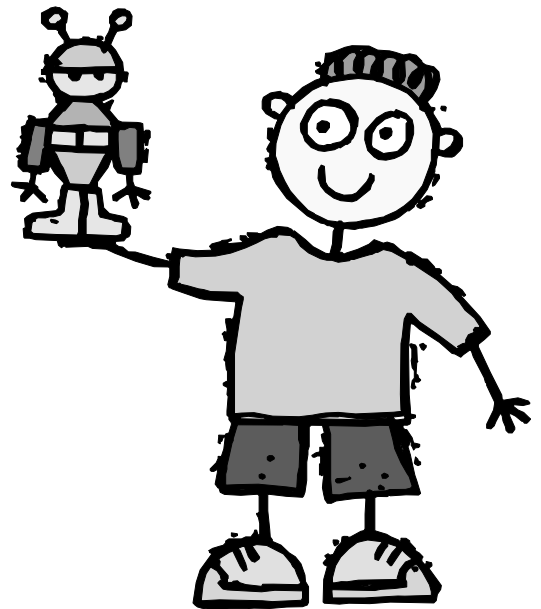
Infants need bright-colored toys of many textures. Because infants put everything in their mouths, toys should be washable, nonbreakable, and have no sharp edges that might cut or scratch. Toys should be large enough so they cannot be swallowed, and they should have no small attached pieces (like eyes on a stuffed animal or bells on a shaker) that could be pulled off and swallowed. Choose toys for them to look at, feel, chew on, hold, and drop. Good toys for infants include: rattles, squeak toys, blocks, crib mobiles, stacking toys and rings, push-pull toys, stuffed animals or dolls, nested boxes or cups, books with rhymes, simple picture books, noise-making toys, small soft toys for throwing, strings of beads (large, plastic), and music-making toys.

## Toddlers

Toddlers are active and enjoy climbing, running, and jumping. They need toys to meet these needs. They also are interested in doing things with their hands as the small muscles in their fingers become more developed. However, toys for this age group should be simple and require little coordination. During this period, toddlers become interested in playing with others and in imitating grown-up activities. Dress-up clothes are great for this!

Toddlers also are interested in getting their hands into things such as paint, play dough, crayons, and chalk. They like to scribble and mix colors. When talking to young children about their creations, you should say “Tell me about your picture,” rather than “What is it?” Toddlers still put toys in their mouths, so you will need to watch for objects with small parts. Also, watch out for items such as paint and chalk that toddlers may try to eat! Toys should be sturdy and should not have sharp edges or points. Toddlers enjoy balloons, but caregivers should be careful to keep uninflated or broken ones out of reach. Children can suffocate if they swallow these.

For a more complete listing of suggested toys for children, go to the 4-H Web site at <http://pa4h.cas.psu.edu>. Click on “curriculum resources” to find the “babysitting” button.





## Session 4 Worksheet

Name:

Club/Group:

### Babysitters Do (Date and have an adult initial when complete.)

Check off the activities you did at home or with your group:

	Date	Adult Initial
Practiced reading aloud to a younger child, a friend, or my helper.		
Visited a library and talked with the librarian about children's books and reading to children.		
Made a picture book for a child.		
Learned and did a fingerplay with a child, a friend, or my helper.		
Made play dough.		
Made a musical instrument.		
Prepared a nutritious snack for a child, a friend, or my helper.		
Brought in toys from home or a friend's house and talked about what age child they would be best for.		

### Babysitters Share (Date and have an adult initial when complete.)

	Date	Adult Initial
Talk with a friend about toys you have seen advertised on television, or use one of the toys you brought to the meeting.		
Do they help a child be creative? Share your discussion with the entire group.		
Share some toys and activities that you really liked when you were younger. Why did you like them so much? Do you still have any of your favorite toys?		

(continued)



## Session 4 Worksheet (continued)

Name:

Club/Group:

### Babysitters in Action

Invite young children to one of your babysitting sessions. Plan several activities to do with the children. If you can't have children come to your session, do this on your own with a younger brother or sister, neighbor, or friend. When you are finished, talk with your helper about what went well and what you would have changed. Write your answers below:

What went really well about my activity session with a younger child:

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## Session 5: Sitting Safely



### Handling Accidents and Emergencies

Accidents are one of the leading causes of injury and death. Children are not often aware of dangers and don't think of what might happen to them or others. Children are curious and sometimes excitable and impulsive.

The best way to handle emergencies is to use prevention strategies!

First, make sure your babysitting tool kit (see Session 6) is safe, with no small items that could choke a child. Loose button eyes should be sewn on tight, plastic toys should be wiped clean, and all broken toys should be fixed or discarded before you enter the home. Carry nothing into the home that could potentially harm a child—a sharp pair of scissors, medicine, or even cosmetics.

Take a copy of the *Red Cross Babysitter's Handbook* or a similar guide as a reference for unusual emergencies. Your 4-H group leader can help you get a copy of the *Red Cross Babysitter's Handbook*, which is up-to-date and full of safety information.

Make sure you know where the parent(s) are and where they can be reached by phone. Also, locate the doctor, poison control, and emergency phone numbers. In most communities, the emergency medical system can be

located by dialing 9-1-1. Be sure to know where the phones and any emergency supplies (especially the syrup of ipecac and activated charcoal) are located in the home.

Do a safety check of the home while the parents are still there—look for stacks of items above the refrigerator, extension cords, anything on the floor that could cause a fall, dangling curtain cords or plastic bags (esp. dry cleaner bags) that could prevent a child from breathing, cleaning products, knives, sharp coffee table edges, and the location of outlets in the play area.

Get yourself settled in—remove your coat, use the bathroom, etc. while the parents are still there—so you can give the utmost attention to the children in your care when the parents leave. Do not do anything that will distract you from them.

Some of the most common accidents in the home are poisoning, choking, burns, electrocution, and injuries from falls.

### Poisons and Choking

There are many types of poisons in a home. Pills, household cleaning supplies, many houseplants, laundry detergents, cosmetics, and some arts and crafts materials can be problems. Young children and especially infants like to pick up things and put them in their mouths. They do this naturally. You may have to get down to their level to determine some of the hazards that are in their path.

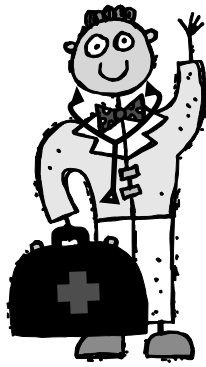
Also, be wary of giving children any food that smells or looks old, even though some food poisoning may not be detectable to any of your senses. Children also may have allergies to certain foods. The best practice is to give children only the medicine or food the parent says to give them.

Prevent food poisoning by washing your hands carefully before and often during food preparation. Soap up your hands completely in warm water, working the soap in and among your fingers and under your nails. Singing the “alphabet” song is a good way to know you are spending enough time scrubbing. Washing hands is important, as many germs are carried by hands. Rinse well and dry on a clean towel.

Also, it's very important to wash your hands carefully after using the bathroom or changing a diaper.

Certain foods such as hot dogs, grapes and cherry tomatoes are associated with choking. Cut foods into small pieces. Try to keep mealtime calm, and watch the children chew their food. Keep the servings small, allowing children to have more as they need it. For more information on feeding children safely, refer to the food activities section of this project.

Children should never bite on balloons. They can break, and a piece can lodge in the throat and cause suffocation.



## In an Emergency

In an emergency, stay calm and focus on the situation, as you will be making decisions. Let the child and other children in the house know that you are competent and in control of the situation. They will look to you. Try to call a neighbor or someone to watch the other children, or sit them down someplace away from the injured person or emergency situation but where you can watch them. Talk in low soothing tones and smile—even if you don't feel confident at the moment.

Your biggest decision in an emergency is when to call for emergency (9-1-1) help and when to call the parents. When in doubt, call the emergency medical system (9-1-1 in most communities) or the poison control center first and tell them you are the babysitter. Be ready to give information about how to locate the parents. If there is a fire in the house, take the children and call from a neighbor's house.

## What to Tell Emergency Workers

Stay calm on the phone. Speak clearly and give information so emergency workers can picture what is happening. They will help you!

Say, "This is an emergency. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a babysitter. I have (have not) called the parents yet.

"I am at \_\_\_\_\_ (give an address or directions), and the phone number is \_\_\_\_\_ (in case you get cut off)."

Answer any questions, keeping in mind that the tone of your voice and your actions are as important to the child as the medical person talking to you on the phone. Children must know you are calm and confident, even if you don't feel that way at the moment.

Medical persons likely will ask you:

1. What kind of emergency you have.
2. How many people are involved.
3. What the injury is, what the person looks like, the child's color, the hotness or coolness of their skin, how fast their heart is beating, etc.

Listen to what the medical person says. He or she may want to keep you on the line. If you feel that you need to drop the phone or hang up and call the parent, let the emergency worker know this before you do it.

To help you cooperate with emergency medical staff, here is a checklist of skills you might learn to be prepared:

- How to clean and dress small cuts and wounds.
- How to make and apply a cold compress.
- How to make and apply a warm compress.
- What Syrup of Ipecac and activated charcoal look like and where they are located. Never make a decision to use these without first calling the Poison Control Center.
- How to read household product labels for instructions on poison emergencies. Recognize that all poisons are not treated the same way.
- How to cover an injured child while calmly talking to them, smiling, and listening.
- How to use the Heimlich maneuver for a baby and an older child.
- How to apply pressure to stop bleeding.
- How to explain the situation to emergency personnel.
- How to recognize and prevent shock.
- Use of safety gates on a stairway.
- How to secure cabinet latches and outlet covers.

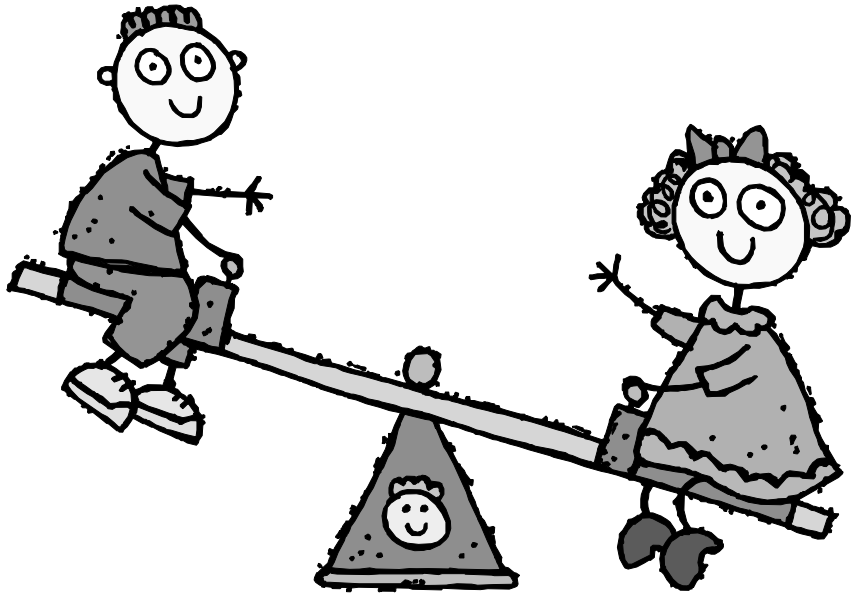
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## Situations

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Practice the following role plays until you feel confident. You may want to ask a nurse, emergency worker, or other medical professional to guide you in this exercise. Discuss how each of these situations could be prevented.

- A young child got some shampoo or a fleck of dirt in his or her eye.
- A child has a nose bleed.
- A child is vomiting.
- A child has taken a prescription medicine.
- A child is standing there with a bone poking out of his/her arm.
- A child stops breathing.
- A child has an earache.
- A child is choking.
- A child has gum in his/her hair.
- You suspect the child has fallen while in a swimming pool or bathtub.
- A young child has cut him/herself on a sharp object.
- A young child fell in the swimming pool and is no longer breathing.
- A child fell into a swimming pool and is thrashing in the deep end, and you do not know how to swim.
- A child was stung by a bee or sees a bee on his/her arm.
- A child put his/her hand on a hot stove.
- The parents come home and want to know what happened.



## General Guidelines for Treating Emergencies

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- Force yourself to be calm. You will think more clearly, be able to handle the situation better and describe it to medical help, and reduce the panic and possible shock symptoms of the child.
- In case of a fire, walk (don't run) to the nearest exit from the home. If the house is dark and smoking, move on your hands and knees, as there will be some air close to the floor. Do not open any door that is warm or hot to the touch. If the child is on fire, have him or her stop, drop to the floor, and roll back and forth until the fire is out.
- To stop bleeding, use a clean 4"-by-4" bandage, a towel, or a compress, and apply steady pressure.
- Do not move anyone who has fallen or who you suspect has broken a bone, unless there is a greater emergency (such as a fire) that would further injure the person. In this case, follow the emergency medical directions for moving someone.
- Do not allow the child to rub a wound or eye injury. If you need to rinse a chemical from the eye, lower the affected eye to prevent transfer to the other eye, and rinse in cool running water.
- Minor burns should be treated by running cool water on the injured areas.
- Do not give an unconscious person anything to eat or drink.



# Session 5 Worksheet

Name:

Club/Group:

## Babysitters Do (Date and have an adult initial when complete.)

Check off those activities you did at home or with your group:

	Date	Adult Initial
Made a first aid kit to take into a home or use at a playground.		
Participated in a first-aid training session.		
Role-played at least four emergency situations.		

## Babysitters Share

Discuss emergency situations you have heard about or in which you have been involved. How did the people involved respond? Which responses were good? Which responses could be improved?

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## Babysitters in Action

Share what you learned about handling emergencies with your parents, a school class, a parent you babysit for, or another adult.

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# Session 6: Sharing Tool Kits & Portfolios

This is the final session in your babysitting project! You will share your babysitting tool kit and/or portfolio. The kit can be completed at home or during this session, depending on how your helper plans the sessions. The portfolio (introduced in Session 2 of this project) should include things you collected that relate to babysitting while doing this project.

## Why a Babysitting Tool Kit?

When carpenters build houses, they use tools. Babysitter's tools are the things you need to play with and care for young children. A tool kit can supply you with the necessary materials and equipment. Parents will likely feel that you are a serious and interested babysitter when they learn you are prepared. Children will like the tool kit because it will have new and different items for them to use. You may want to save your kit items as a surprise or for a special time with the children.

## What is a Tool Kit?

The tool kit can be a cardboard box, a small canvas bag, an old shoe box, a shopping bag, or a brown paper bag. Any kind of container will work—even a small suitcase or a backpack—as long

as some of the items will fit inside. You may not want to take all of your kit items on every job. Select items that are specific for the age of child you are caring for.

## Inside the Kit

Include creative and fun ideas, activities, and toys. You can make some of the items in the kit or you may include used toys if they are clean and safe. Part of the fun is building your kit! It doesn't need to be expensive! You can include your own used toys or find good ones at garage sales or thrift stores.

## Suggestions for Kit Items

- Crayons
- Balls
- Pencils
- Blunt scissors
- Colored paper
- String
- Colored yarn
- Pipe cleaners
- Old magazines for cutting
- Notebook
- Old envelopes and stamps
- Small plastic toys
- Story books
- Flashlight
- Doll
- Fabric scraps
- Puppets



## Evaluate Your Kit

As you build your kit, think about safety, creativity, and the ages of the children. Also, make sure everything in your kit is clean and sturdy.

## Congratulations!

You have learned the steps in *Babysitting Beginnings* that will help you care for young children.



## Session 6 Worksheet

Name:

Club/Group:

### Babysitters Do (Date and have an adult initial when complete.)

	Date	Adult Initial
I made a babysitting tool kit.		
I made a babysitting portfolio.		

### Babysitters Share (Date and have an adult initial when complete.)

	Date	Adult Initial
Share your tool kit at a meeting or with another group of youth or adults.		
Enter your tool kit or portfolio in the county fair or 4-H Roundup.		

### Babysitters in Action

I took my kit on a babysitting job!



I Pledge:

My Head to clearer thinking,  
My Heart to greater loyalty,  
My Hands to larger service, and  
My Health to better living,  
For my club, my community,  
My country and my world.