

Preparing the Sitter and The Children

Both babysitters and children benefit when parents take time to prepare them for their time together. Here are some things to talk about and to write down before you leave.

For the Sitter...

1. General information

- Your whole name, address and the phone number of the location sitter is at-she may not know this or forget it in an emergency
- Where you will be (name, address and phone) and when you will return
- Emergency numbers and who to call for help
- Rules about safety

2. House Information

- How to operate appliances, fire extinguisher, etc.
- Where light switches are located
- How to lock doors and where the keys are
- Peculiarities-tricky toilets, funny noises...

3. Food

- What the sitter and child can eat and when
- Rules about cooking

4. Clothing

- Where clean clothes and pajamas are
- How you want your child diapered, where to find supplies and how to dispose of them

5. Comforting techniques

6. Special toys, games, snacks

7. Routines

- Bath time, bedtime, mealtime, naps...



8. Rules

- For the child: TV, snacks, behavior, cleaning up...
- For the sitter: phone, TV, homework, food, having friends over, cleaning up, discipline...

9. Discipline methods

- Child's typical behavior
- Behavior that requires discipline
- What discipline methods to use and what not to use. Explain some details of how you do the discipline. (For example: timeout for 2 minutes, on this chair, within your sight...)

And for your child...

- Have the sitter over to meet your child a day or so before you need to be gone.
- Think of special activities for the sitter to do with your child.
- Tell your child in advance where you're going and for how long. How far in advance depends on the age of your child.
- Have the sitter come a little early so you have time to explain things and so your child gets to see that you are comfortable with and trust the sitter. Rushing out the door right away is scary for kids when they aren't used to a new babysitter.
- Clearly explain to your child that even though you are not there, the rules and routines remain nearly the same and that the babysitter is in charge and will take good care of them.
- Help your child and sitter get started on an activity before you go.
- Say good-bye. Sneaking out is not fair to your child.

