Babysitting Basics

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Characteristics of a Great Babysitter:
- Good health
- Dependable and responsible
- Love children
- Self-confident
- Mature
- Use good manners
- Knowledgeable about children
- Business-like attitude
- Adaptable and flexible

Business Arrangements
You have a job to do and someone is paying you to do it. Arrive on time, maybe a little early to discuss last minute items. This is not the time to talk on the phone or have friends over to visit. Leave the house in good order and help the children pick up toys and games they have used. Clean up anything that has been used in the kitchen. Keep the home phone open for important calls. Messages for parents should be taken correctly. Make all arrangements with the parents prior to sitting for the first time.

Financial Arrangements
Check with other sitters in your community to establish your fees. Decide if you are going to charge by the hour or by the job. Decide if you will charge all families the same—how about different size families? The time to discuss your fee is when you accept the job. Your working time begins when you arrive and ends when the parents return home. Will you be required or asked to do special tasks like washing dishes? If so, discuss a fee for that and if it is included in your base pay.

Questions to ask the parents
- Are there any food restrictions?
- Are there any television/computer/game restrictions?
- How do you feel about children using slang words or talking back?
- How do the parents expect you to deal with misbehavior?
- When is bedtime?
- Are there certain bedtime routines you need to know?
- Are there restrictions or religious practices you need to know?
- Are there clothing practices you need to know?
- Are there family pets and what should be done about them?
- Where are the emergency supplies like flashlights?
- Are there alarms and special locks and how do they work?

Getting to and From the Job
How will you get to their home and back again? You should not have to walk home alone at night even for a short distance. The best solution may be to have your own parents drop you off and pick you up if you do not feel comfortable riding with other adults.