



Sheffield
Information
Link

FACTSHEET

What is a babysitter?

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A babysitter is someone who will look after your child or children in your own home for short periods of time. Many parents or carers will use a babysitter at some stage, to allow them to socialise in the evening for example. It is important to remember that babysitters are not formal childcare.

Do babysitters have to be registered?

No, babysitters are not registered and at present there are no regulations which govern them. It is therefore important for parents and carers to decide whether someone is suitable and responsible enough to look after their children.

How old do babysitters have to be?

The law does not state an age at which young people can babysit. Leaving your child or children in the care of someone else is a big responsibility.

The NSPCC does not recommend asking anyone under 16 to look after a young child. If you use a babysitter who is under 16 years old, you as the parent are still legally responsible to ensure that your child or children come to no harm. In other words, you and not your babysitter would be held to account should anything happen to children left in the babysitter's care. However some young people, even at 16, may not be mature enough to be left to care for children. NSPCC have produced a useful leaflet 'Home alone'. For details see 'Useful contacts' section below.)

How do I find a babysitter?

- Through an agency. There are some national babysitting agencies and some local agencies for nannies and other childcarers who are prepared to do babysitting (see contacts on reverse). Some

agencies will carry out checks on the carers they employ, such as police or criminal records bureau (CRB) checks and follow up references. If you use an agency make sure you are clear what checks they have carried out.

- From a recommendation. Friends or relatives with children may have used a babysitter whom they can recommend.
- You could place an advertisement in local shops or your local college but be aware you will need to be thorough in checking they are suitable to babysit for your child.
- Some areas of Sheffield have babysitting circles. This usually means that there is a reciprocal arrangement and you would be expected to babysit for someone else in return. SIL can provide information about these.

How do I choose a babysitter?

The NSPCC advise: 'Follow your instincts. If you have any doubts about a childminder, babysitter or other carer, don't take them on.....listen to your children. If they seem unhappy with the person looking after them, try to find someone else.' (NSPCC 'Home Alone' leaflet. For details see 'Useful contacts' section below.)

Invite them to meet your child before they babysit for you and see how your child reacts to them.

Always get references, at least two, and follow them up. This could be a tutor at college or other parents the person has done babysitting for, if they are experienced. Try to assess their maturity and their ability to cope in emergency situations.

Ask them questions: What are their ideas

programmes do they consider suitable for young children to watch?

What does the babysitter need to know?

Let them know of any allergies or special needs your child or children may have. What they should do if your child is distressed or behaves badly when you leave. Discuss with them what they would do in an emergency and ensure they know how to contact you. Make sure they know your 'house rules', e.g. can they smoke in your house, what can they eat, can they babysit with a friend, are there rooms you don't want them to have access to. Give them a time

when they can expect you back. Ensure you can contact them to let them know if you will be later. Agree payment beforehand and discuss how your babysitter will get back home, will you pay for a taxi for example.

Is your child disabled?

SIL provides a specialist information service for families with children who are disabled or have special needs. It can provide information on services, support and specific conditions and disabilities. This service is called SIGN and is based at the Ryegate Children's Centre but also has an information line. For details see 'Useful contacts' section below.

Useful contacts and information

Sheffield Information Link (SIL)

Tel: 0114 275 6699 (out of hours answerphone). Textphone 0114 249 4939

11 Leopold Street, Sheffield, S1 2GY

Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30am – 5.30pm; Weds 9.30am – 6.00pm; Fri 9.30am – 4.00pm

Email: info@sheffinfo link.org.uk

For information and guidance on finding childcare and children & young peoples' services in Sheffield. SIL produces a range of useful factsheets, including one on Children's & Young People's Rights, these can be viewed on our website: www.sheffinfo link.org.uk

SIGN Information Service

Tel: 0114 266 9476 (out of hours answerphone)

Ryegate Children's Centre, Tapton Crescent Road, Sheffield, S10 5DD

Monday – Friday 10.00am – 1.00pm, drop in and phone service

Email: sign@sheffinfo link.org.uk

Free information on significant health needs, disabilities and special educational needs for children, young people and their families.

NSPCC

Sheffield Young Peoples' Centre (NSPCC)

35 George Street, Sheffield S1 2PF

Tel: (0114) 228 9200

Email: sheffield@nspcc.org.uk

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm, drop in service Monday & Friday 2.00pm – 5.00pm,

Wednesday 2.00pm – 6.00pm

Assessment and therapy service for children and parents where children may be at risk of abuse. Counselling, therapy and drop in service for children and young people aged 9 – 18.



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



This Factsheet is available in other formats upon request, please call 0114 275 6699 for more details.

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FACTSHEET

***Safehands Babysitting Network**

Tel: 0870 8446688

Website: www.safehandscare.com

National network of babysitters and nannies.

***Sitters – For Evening Babysitters**

Tel: 0800 38 900 38

Email: enquiries@sitters.co.uk

Website: www.sitters.co.uk

Monday – Friday 8.00am – 7.00pm, Saturday 9.00am – 1.00pm (closed Bank Holidays)

A national service (but with varied coverage across the country) for parents to book babysitters or nannies for an evening.

*** Sheffield Information Link has not vetted these agencies in any way. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to make sure that the childcare services used are safe for their child.**