

Proper care when you're not there

Child Safety Commissioner

promoting the safety and wellbeing of children

To make sure your child is safe when you use a babysitter, there are some things you need to think about and some things you need to do.

It is good to ask for help - needing help to arrange a babysitter does not mean you are having trouble looking after your child.

Have you thought about:

Is the place safe where they are caring for your child?

Does the person have trouble managing their temper or use drugs or alcohol?

How well do I and my child know the person?

Has the person had problems looking after their own children?

Do they know what to do in an emergency and how to contact you?

Do they know how to appropriately comfort my child?

Is the person mature enough to look after a child properly?

Should I trust them with my child?



Actions for you:

Tell the person where you will be and when you will be back.

Leave phone numbers and details so they can reach you.

Leave a comfort toy if your child is young, or interesting things for them to do if they are older.

Tell the person about any illnesses your child has or medicine they need.

Tell the person how to safely put your baby to bed: baby on their back and face uncovered.

If you don't feel OK about the person DON'T leave your child with them.

Plan ahead

It helps if you have already thought about who you know that you would trust with your child – speak to them and make sure they are happy to help you.

People around you can help you work out a babysitting plan. Have you thought about talking to:

- Your local Maternal and Child Health Nurse
- Maternal & Child Health Line (about children 0–6 years) call **13 22 29** – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Parentline (about children 0–18 years of age) call **13 22 89** – 8am to 12 midnight Monday to Friday and 10am to 10pm weekends
- Your local Community Health Centre
- Family Services at your local council

Developing networks, such as playgroups and parent groups, helps you get to know other parents in your area who may be able to help you out.

Warning signs

Look out for these concerns or potential warning signs:

- **Any person who asks your child to keep a secret.**
 - **Your child's bad or unusual reaction to the person (withdrawn, angry, frightened).**
 - **Physical contact with your child that makes you or your child uncomfortable.**
 - **Someone who wants to spend time alone with your child at times when they are not babysitting for you.**
 - **Someone whose reasons for helping you are unclear.**
 - **Bruises or injury to your child that happened when the person was caring for them.**
 - **Any person you don't have a good feeling about – male or female, family or friend.**
- If you see any warning signs don't leave your child with the person.**

**Remember:
cigarette
smoke is bad
for babies**

Do not leave infants, toddlers or children without appropriate supervision under any circumstances.

