

Waterloo Fire Rescue Fire PALS Injury Prevention Program

Babysitting Skills

Grades 4 – 5

To educate the prospective babysitter on responsibilities expected of them.

Learning Objectives:

At the completion of this unit, 100% of the students will be able to:

1. identify what to bring while babysitting
2. describe what to do when they first get to the house or apartment
3. perform basic first aid
4. define an emergency situation
5. define skills needed to emulate being the parent

Time Element

Knowledge/Attitude: 20 minutes

Activity/Skill: 10 minutes

Introduction/Content: 15 minutes

Tell the students that caring for young children is a great responsibility. The babysitter should recognize the importance of being trusted with the care of someone else's life. The babysitter must be able to react quickly and correctly in an emergency. Babysitting should be viewed as a time to act like parents, rather than a time to escape from parents.

I. Ask the students what they think are some important items to bring to their babysitting job. Accept reasonable responses and make sure to add these items into your discussion if the children do not submit them as ideas:

- Paper and pencil to write important numbers down.
- Small flashlight for power outages.
- Ideas for entertaining the children.

Note: Tell the students that showing that you are prepared will impress upon the parents that you are responsible and instill confidence in your ability to take care of their children.

II. Tell the students that it is important to ask questions of the parents and take notes before they leave you with the children.

Some important ideas to include in the discussion should include:

- Where are you going?
- What time will you be home?
- Who, or where should you go to if you need help? Emphasize the need for this in event of medical attention needed for required permission to treat. (Stress your experiences with the ambulance/emergency rooms.) Tell the students to write down these important numbers and put them near the phone. They should also have the address of the home they are babysitting in written down and near the phone.
- Ask about preferred activities of the children, bedtime rituals: baths, pajamas, snacks, and stories.
- Ask if there are family pets? If so, do they need special care? (Let outside, and fed?)

III. Ask the parents if they have a home escape plan for the family.

- Do the children know it? Are there two ways out of each room?
- Where is the family meeting place?
- Do the smoke alarms work? Ask parents for a demonstration of the smoke alarms. Simply have the parent push the button to see if the alarm goes off.

IV. Tell the students to pay attention to what they see outside and inside the house.

- Is the house address posted and easy to see outside of the house? Tell the students that this is important because if they have an emergency and need a fire truck or an ambulance needs to come to the house the house numbers need to be visible.
- Pay attention to the location of the kid's bedrooms.
- Are there smoke detectors in each bedroom and on every level of the home?
- Are there two ways out of each bedroom?

V. Basic First AID (See basic first aid lesson for additional information.)

- A person can drown in 1 inch of water. Never leave a small child unattended in a bathtub, kiddie pool, hot tub or swimming pool. If the home has a swimming pool, make sure that all gates, access doors, doggy doors, and windows are closed or locked.
- Cool all burns with cool, not cold water. If skin is already blistered, charred or dead white, immediately get help.
- Initial Deep Cut= R.E.D. Rest, Elevate, Direct Pressure
- How to tell if someone is breathing: Look, Listen and Feel.

II. Cook safely and only with permission from the parents. Make sure that the students understand that if they don't feel comfortable cooking while on the job, that it is okay to tell the parents that they would rather not partake in it. Stress that there are a lot of foods that the children in their care can be fed that do not require cooking. For example: sandwiches and snacks. If they do cook they should:

- Follow all cooking directions on the packages.
- Keep children and toys from cooking areas.
- Do not carry hot dishes around children.
- Do not wear loose fitting clothes over stove.
- Turn panhandles in to avoid children knocking them or pulling them down.
- Keep potholders handy.
- Smother a pan fire with a lid. Never use water.
- Make sure that you know what cooking materials can go into the home's microwave. A microwave cooks things at a *very high temperature* and *very quickly*, and not all food items and containers react well to that combination. You don't want to risk damaging the microwave or getting hurt! These items should never go into a microwave: aluminum foil, stainless steel knives forks or spoons. Grandma's china, boiling hot water, paper bags, plastics, grapes and fruit, hard-boiled eggs. Never warm a baby's bottle in the microwave.
- Always test hot food and liquids before feeding.

III. 9-1-1 Events

In the event of a fire:

- Remember that fire spreads fast, and is deadly.
- If clothes catch on fire, stop, drop and roll.
- If see flames, smell smoke or hear the smoke alarms immediately get out of the house with the children and go to the family meeting place.
- Feel the door with the back of the hand. If the door is not hot, open it slowly. If it is warm, use another exit.
- Crawl low under smoke. The air near the floor is safer to breathe.
- Smoke kills. Shut the door to keep the smoke from spreading.
- If you cannot escape, close the door and seal around it with a cloth to prevent smoke from entering the room. Hang a white towel or sheet out the window so that when the fire department arrives they will know where to find you.
- Always use the stairs and never an elevator.
- If a fire occurs, get yourself and the children out of the house and do not return to a burning building. Your job is to protect the children, not belongings.

- If someone is left inside, do not go back into the house. Tell firefighters when they arrive. (Tell a war story here.)
- Go to the family meeting place and make sure that everyone is there.
- Take the children to a neighbor's and call 911. Give 911 dispatch the complete address of the home that you are at, describe the situation and inform them if anyone is still inside. Stay on the phone until you are told to hang up.
- After you call 911, immediately call the children's parents. Before they leave for the evening, make sure that they leave a number where they can be reached.

If a pan on the stove catches on fire:

- If small, use a potholder to put a lid over the pan if you can do it safely.
- Turn the burner off.
- Call 9-1-1.

IV. Be the parent

- Never leave children unattended. Watch small children closely at all times.
- Check sleeping children regularly.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach.
- Do not light candles while babysitting.
- Keep children away from the stove, hot liquids, electric lamps, and space heaters.
- Keep doors and windows locked.
- Make sure that hazardous materials and poisons are kept out of children's reach.
- No phone calls or visitors.
- No headphones or loud music.
- You may watch TV or play video games only if you are able to watch the children and you have permission from the parents. The parents may agree that you may do this after the children have gone to bed.
- Know what an emergency is and be able to calmly respond to one.

Home/ School Connection

Have the children fill out the Fire PALS letters home for babysitting and first aid in the student handbook.

Science/Computer Connection

The students should read information about different degrees of burns on the Internet and then fill out the Burn Alert Concept Map that is in the student handbook. Ask the classroom teacher if he/she would assist with this activity by providing time for the students to complete it.

Art Connection

“Be a lifesaver” coloring page in the 4th and 5th grade student handbook.

Additional Materials:

Make copies of the babysitting brochure for each student. This brochure has important information in it that the babysitter can keep on hand to review important fire and life safety information. One section contains a guide of dos and don'ts regarding fire prevention, one involves home escape planning, and the last section involves what you should do in case of a fire.