

## **BABYSITTING TIPS**

Babysitting is an important job, and like all jobs, it takes a lot of work before as well as during the sitting time. Each job should be carefully planned to make sure you and the children are safe and happy. A good babysitter is an alert person that can act quickly if a problem comes up. Ask yourself first, "Can I do a good job with this many children."

### *Your Own Safety*

Do not take jobs unless you know the people. Ask a friend, maybe they have sat for them before. Have your parents or the family you are working for pick you up and take you home. **DON'T WALK OR HITCHHIKE HOME.** Let your parents know where you will be, the phone number, and when you will get home. Don't ask friends over or "broadcast" where you will be sitting. Your job is to watch the children, not entertain your own friends.

### *Before The Parents Leave*

Have a pre-sitting visit. Get to know the children, pets, parents, and house. Take time at your own home to write down information on where you are sitting (name, address and phone number), where the parents can be reach, emergency phone numbers and a neighbor's name and phone number. Take it to the job and put it next to the phone. Get **WRITTEN** instructions about any medicine or special health needs you may have to give. Be sure you **REALLY** understand them. Know exactly where first aid supplies are kept and how to use them. Have all emergency numbers posted by the phone. Check and lock all outside doors and windows. When it gets dark, close the curtains and turn on enough lights to let people know you are home. Know the phone number and where the parents can be reached.

### *After the Parents Leave*

If someone knocks at the door, do not open it until you know who is there. Always look out a window, use an eye viewer if there is one, or talk through the door to find out who is there. If a stranger asks to use the phone to make an emergency call, ask them to wait outside while you make the call. Don't let them wait inside while you call. Never let anyone in you don't know. If you become concerned about a stranger or see anything strange, call the sheriff immediately and ask an officer to come help you. Don't be afraid to call. It's better to be safe than sorry.

### *The Children's Safety*

**NEVER** leave the children alone even for "just a second." Keep the children out of dangerous places like under the kitchen sink, garage, basement, and bathroom medicine chest.

### *Poisonings*

If you think a child has swallowed paint, pills, laundry soap, or any other poison, call the Poison Control Center for Illinois at toll free 800-252-2022. **DO NOT DO ANYTHING UNTIL A DOCTOR TELLS YOU WHAT TO DO.** Call the parents, the neighbor, or your parents for help if necessary.

*Fire Danger*

Be alert for signs of smoke or flame. If fire breaks out:

Keep Calm.

Get the children out of the house and meet at a planned spot – to be sure everyone is out. DO NOT GO BACK into the house for any reason. If you think a child or pet is still inside, tell a firefighter. Don't go in yourself. Call the fire department from a neighbor's house. Let the firefighter hang up first.

*Information Provided by the Illinois Sheriff's Association*