

Other People Looking After Your Child – Babysitters

Leaving your child in the care of another person requires careful consideration.

Victorian law does not say how old a babysitter must be; you must think about the maturity of the person and if they have the skills to keep your child safe and well – check they have experience in looking after a child of similar age to yours – this is particularly important for babies.

- Talk to other people you know and trust and ask who they have used as a babysitter.
- Ask a potential babysitter for references for you to contact to help you decide if the person is a good fit for you and your children.
- Have a conversation with the babysitter about your expectations - be clear they must never leave a child unattended; explain bath safety; safe sleeping requirements for a baby or young child, and the importance of never shaking a baby.
- Be clear with the babysitter that you expect positive interaction with your child – it is not OK for a babysitter to yell, hit, abuse, ignore, shame or demean your child.
- Provide your family rules and routines for meal time and bedtimes.
- Make sure you give the babysitter information to help them care for your child safely and clarify any safety issues, including if the babysitter can have a friend over while they are caring for your child and who can and cannot visit the home whilst you are away.
- Prepare your child for a new babysitter – talk to your child about the babysitter and observe their reaction to babysitter or other carer; this may provide insight into how comfortable they feel in the person's care – check with other people who have used the babysitter to ensure that they were happy with them.
- Make sure the babysitter knows what to do in an emergency – have the 000 emergency number clearly displayed, as well as the poisons information 13 11 26.
- Show the babysitter where you keep your first aid kit, fire extinguisher and fire blankets.

