

CHILDCARE / BABYSITTING GUIDELINES AND ROUTINES

If you are deciding to enter into a reciprocal childcare and/or babysitting agreement with another parent that you may or may not be housesharing with, it is important to put into place clear guidelines - just as you would if you were leaving your child with anyone you didn't know.

- Spend some time with the carer first and see how they treat their own children, and how they react to yours.
- Make sure you have the carer's full name, address and contact numbers. You may wish to confirm by viewing their drivers licence.
- Make sure the other parent is familiar with your property if that is where they will be caring for your child. Show them all door locks, fuse boxes, baby monitors, telephones, light switches, bathrooms, tea and coffee making facilities.
- Discuss any potential danger areas in the house.
- Discuss with the carer whether you are happy for them to take your child off the property at any time, either for a walk or in the car somewhere. If this is acceptable to you, then discuss whether they need to let you know in advance that this is happening in case you need to contact them whilst they are out.
- Leave a list of contact numbers - including mobiles and landlines for yourself, family and friends. Also include emergency numbers for doctors, hospitals, dentists, ambulance, fire service, police etc. Make sure they have the address and telephone number of your house written down in case they need to contact emergency services.
- Discuss whether it is acceptable for the carer to have friends or family visiting whilst your child is in their care.
- Decide whether or not you wish the carer to give your child a bath.
- Show the carer the child's room including their favourite toys and stories etc. When your child is asleep you may wish the carer to check on them on a regular basis. Discuss any nightlights that are to be left on.
- Discuss how your carer should comfort your child if they become upset, and what disciplinary action they are allowed to take if your child misbehaves.
- Discuss your child's routine - eating, sleeping, whether they are allowed to watch TV or play on the computer, whether they can use the phone, what foods they are not allowed to eat e.g. grapes, nuts, popcorn or other foods which may cause a choking risk.
- Show the carer where your first aid kit is kept. Find out what level of first aid and CPR they are familiar with.
- Discuss whether your child is allowed to play outside, and what the rules are.
- If your child is not well it is advisable not to leave them with another carer.
- Talk to your child afterwards and find out what the experience was like for them.