

Babysitting for Children in Foster Care Placement

Supervision

As a resource parent, it is your responsibility to ensure that your children in foster care receive adequate care and appropriate supervision while living in your home. As specified in the Manual of Requirements for Resource Family Parents:

1. The resource family parent will ensure the supervision of each child in placement, as appropriate to the child's age and particular needs, at all times.
2. The resource family parent will be reachable by telephone in the event of an emergency or illness when the child in placement or resource family is not in the home.

What if I have to run an errand and can't take the children with me?

At times when it is necessary for you to be absent from the home, appropriate babysitting arrangements must be made for your own children and your children in care.

What is babysitting?

Babysitting is considered short term care and supervision of a child for less than 24 hours that occurs on an occasional basis.

Hiring a babysitter:

Hiring a babysitter takes planning on your part. You should use the same good judgment in determining if a person is appropriate to babysit your child in foster care that you would use in considering someone to care for your own child. When hiring a babysitter it is important to consider your child's age, physical, developmental and social needs. The provider you choose must be an appropriate caregiver capable of meeting your child's needs.

Do I need to notify DCP&P when hiring a babysitter?

It is a good practice to inform the child's caseworker when hiring a babysitter.

Can a youth (your own child, relative, or neighbor) be a babysitter?

Anyone who you know to be sufficiently reliable and mature may care for your children in foster care, including your biological child, a relative or neighbor. The length of babysitting time depends on the maturity and needs of your child and the maturity of the babysitter.

Can a youth in foster care be a babysitter?

You are encouraged to provide normal experiences for your children in foster care, as you would for your own children. Therefore, children in foster care are permitted to provide care for other children in foster care and/or your own children, or other children, upon the agreement of the child providing the care.

Basic guidelines to consider before hiring a babysitter:

- Meet the sitter and check references and training in advance.
- Be sure the sitter is mature enough to handle common emergencies and provide first aid.
- Have the sitter spend time with you before babysitting to meet the children and learn their routines.
- Show the sitter around the house. Point out fire escape routes and potential problem areas. Instruct the sitter to leave the house with the children right away in case of a fire and to call the fire department from a neighbor's house.



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- Discuss the children's feeding, bathing and sleeping arrangements with the babysitter.
- Tell your sitter about any allergies or specific needs your children have.
- Have emergency supplies available including a flashlight, first aid chart and first aid supplies.
- Tell the sitter where you will be and when you will return.
- Post your address, phone number and emergency numbers near the phone.
- Provide the phone number of a neighbor, or someone else who can assist in an emergency, if you cannot be reached right away.
- Be certain that the sitter is aware he/she should never leave the child alone unattended in the house or car - even for a minute.
- Establish rules for the sitter, especially if a teenager, such as no visitors in the home while he/she is babysitting.

Can I be reimbursed for babysitting expenses?

Babysitting reimbursement requires the Local Office Manager or designee's approval. Payment is a flat rate of \$8.35 per hour. Babysitting expenses are not reimbursed for your personal activities but are given when the reason for your absence from the home is an activity directly related to foster parenting. Some examples are attendance at Child Placement Reviews, DCP&P Case Conferences, court hearings, school conferences, DCP&P meetings and medical/dental appointments for your child in care.

If you have any questions about
Babysitting for Children in Foster Care Placement,
 please contact
 FAFS' Information Line at 800.222.0047, or visit us online at
www.fafsonline.org.

All of our services are free and confidential.



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FAFS' MISSION:

Our mission is to provide support, training and advocacy to meet the special needs of foster, adoptive and kinship families, who provide safe, stable and nurturing homes for children in foster care.

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