

What to Ask in a Sitter Interview

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For many parents, the thought of finding a babysitter or nanny can be terrifying. *What if I don't pick a good one? How can I be sure the sitter is experienced enough to care for my children? Will this particular sitter be a good match for my family?*

Many of these answers lie in the sitter interview. Whether you ask every question below or simply use this list as a loose guideline, this checklist will help you get one step closer finding the perfect sitter for children – as well as peace of mind.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What do you like about babysitting?
- What do you look for in an employer/family?
- How do you get to your sitting jobs? Drive? Walk?
- What are you studying in school or what is your full time job?
- Do you have any allergies to cats, dogs or other pets?

BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

- How many years have you been working with children?
- What child care roles have you done in the past? Teacher, nanny, coach, etc.?
- How many families have you cared for and how old were the children?
- How many families do you currently sit for?
- Do you have experience in bathing children?

TRAINING AND SAFETY

- Do you know First Aid?
- Do you know CPR? Infant CPR?
- Are you familiar with the Heimlich maneuver for children and infants?
- Can you swim?
- Are you familiar with emergency numbers?
- Can you drive in an emergency?
- Have you ever used a fire extinguisher before?

BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS (look for concrete examples)

- Tell me about a time where you faced a crisis on the job. How did you handle it?
- What would you do with the kids on a day like today?
- What do you do when a child refuses to go to sleep?
- What do you think is the best way to handle tantrums?
- What is your proudest moment in babysitting and why?
- What kinds of discipline have you implemented in the past and why?

RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS

- Can you care for more kids if we have a play date in the house?

- Are you OK assisting with homework, possibly making dinner and/or doing light housework?
- Are you comfortable watching my child as a mother's helper if I decide to stay home during a job?
- Are you will to help with overnight care if needed?

IF NEWBORNS ARE INVOLVED

- Are you comfortable sitting for newborns?
- What do you know about SIDS prevention?
- Are you familiar with Shaken Baby Syndrome?
- Can you change a diaper?
- Can you properly carry and pick up a newborn?
- Can you prepare and heat formula correctly?
- Can you tell if a room is childproofed?

IF THE SITTER WILL BE DRIVING

- Are you comfortable driving children in the car?
- Are there any conditions in which you don't feel comfortable driving? (Rain, snow, evening hours?)
- How many years have you been driving?
- Do you have any marks against your driving record (speeding or accidents)?

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