

Is Your Teen Old Enough to Babysit?

No law says how old a child should be to babysit. Yet, many experts agree that babysitters should be at least 12 years of age or older.



Age, however, is not the only factor to consider.

A child's maturity level, life experience and judgment are also very important. Not all children are cut out to be babysitters. Babysitting requires a teen to be:

- patient,
- trustworthy,
- fun,
- safety conscious,
- organized,
- punctual, and
- prepared.

Looking after someone else's children is a *huge* task. It should never be taken lightly. Parents trust a babysitter to keep their children safe.

If your child is interested in babysitting, call the American Red Cross or your local schools and hospitals. Ask for a list

of babysitting classes. Enroll your teen in one of these classes to learn:

- First aid, CPR and child care basics.
- **911** calling tips. Keep the family's name, address and phone number handy.
- Safe use of the **stove** and microwave.
- **Games** to play with young children, and
- **Decisions** to make before accepting a job.

Before seeking a job, the teen needs to decide:

- How many children to watch at one time.
- What ages of children he can comfortably handle.
- If she can handle kids who cry or whine.
- What hours he is willing to babysit.
- If she can handle a pet. This is especially important if she is afraid of animals.

Babysitting can be a good job for teens. It provides a wonderful service for parents. For the health and safety of everyone, however, make sure your teen is ready for such a big responsibility.

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.