



Asset-Building Ideas for Babysitters

Being a good (caring, responsible, fun) babysitter does more than build your financial assets. You build your Developmental Assets, including those in the Empowerment and Social Competencies categories. You also are an asset builder for the children in your care. Parents benefit too. They have someone they trust to be with their children while they work, take time for themselves, or do other important things.

So what does it take to be an asset-building babysitter? Here are some tips:

- ▶ **Learn as much as you can about the 40 assets and why they are important.** There are different lists of the 40 assets for different age groups.
- ▶ **Give children all of your attention.** Rather than turning on the television, popping in a DVD, or calling a friend, ask them to choose games to play or things to do.
- ▶ **Show parents that you are an asset builder.** Ask questions of parents and kids and show your interest in kids by smiling and saying hello to them when you arrive.
- ▶ **Have a backup adult whom you can call if you need help or support.** This could be your parent, neighbor, aunt or uncle, grandparent, or some other adult you know.
- ▶ **Ask the parents what boundaries they have for their children,** and how you can uphold these boundaries.
- ▶ **Check out age-appropriate books from the library before you babysit.** Ask a librarian for suggestions. Read these books to the children, or let them read to you.
- ▶ **Create a babysitting co-op** with a couple of reliable friends. A co-op is where you agree to sometimes refer parents to other babysitters you know, and they do the same for you.
- ▶ **Tell parents how much you charge before you take the job.** Then they won't be surprised or pay you less than you expected. If parents can't afford what you charge, you'll have to decide if you are willing to lower your rates.
- ▶ **Set good limits** for how many hours you will work and how late you will stay.
- ▶ **Learn about child development.** Playing should be the best part of babysitting. Understanding the ways children play at different ages will make your time together more fun.
- ▶ **Take first-aid courses** and make sure the parents give you emergency numbers so you can reach them.
- ▶ **Recognize how your role is different depending on the age of the children you're caring for.** Babies, toddlers, and preschoolers require intensive care and supervision. School-age children need supervision, but you can give them more opportunities to care for themselves.
- ▶ **Model nonviolence** and teach children to resolve conflicts without hurting others.
- ▶ **Wait until the kids have gone to bed to watch movies or shows that might be inappropriate for them.** If you're not sure what's OK for them to watch, ask their parents.
- ▶ **Have fun!**