



NEWS RELEASE

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Dinner, Dancing, Romance, Fun, and Babysitter Safety

Soon it will be February 14th, Valentine's Day, and many parents will be going out for an adult evening—dinner, dancing, romance, and fun. What are your plans? Do those plans include hiring a babysitter for the evening? If you answered yes, then now is the time to think about what your sitter should know to keep your child/children safe while you are away.

Emergency Numbers: Put the following emergency information in a prominent place. Ask your babysitter to arrive a few minutes early so you can go over the information together and discuss emergency procedures.

- Phone numbers and addresses where you can be reached. Include the time you plan on arriving at your destination, the time you plan on leaving, and the time you expect to return home.
- Name, address and phone numbers of neighbors or family members who could be contacted for help.
- Phone numbers of fire department, police department, and poison control center (911 may take care of all three).
- Name and phone number of your child/children's doctor and hospital.
- Name, address, phone number and nearest cross streets of your home. In an emergency, people sometimes cannot remember where they are and waste valuable time with the emergency operator. Writing down this information helps prevent this problem.

Home Information: Your home may be a new and unfamiliar environment to your babysitter. Show your babysitter how your house "works".

- Where are the locks, alarms, and extra keys? How do they work?
- How do the windows work?
- Where do you keep the flashlights, candles & matches, first aid and cleaning supplies?
- How does the can opener work? The microwave? The high chair? The crib?
- Are there any other appliances the sitter might use and how do they work?
- Are there any appliances you don't want the sitter to use?
- How do you adjust the heat or air conditioning?
- Take a tour of your home. Make sure you show your sitter where everything that might be needed is located.

And don't forget to show your babysitter the quickest route to escape from your home (especially your child/children's rooms) in case of fire or other emergency. Agree on a predetermined location for your babysitter and child/children to meet you.

Adapted from *A Guide to the Business of Babysitting*, which can be found at the University of Illinois Extension website <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/babysitting>