



Fatherly

How to Find a Babysitter You Can Trust

Because everybody needs to get away sometimes.

By Lizzy Francis
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It's date night. Or it's work late night. Or your oldest threw up on the school bus and you have to go get them when you should be picking up your youngest. Or you are just looking for someone who you can count on. You need a babysitter. You don't know how to find a babysitter. You don't know where to start. You're not alone.

There are a lot of reasons to find a babysitter — chief among them is that having backup never hurts — but it's also an impossibly unnerving process. Babysitters don't come with the imprimatur of a school. At best, they have a certificate. And a lot of them are young. And they will be alone with your kid. It's okay and totally normal to be worried about babysitters. There's a reason they don't have, as a group, the best reputation, which is a good incentive to take a process-oriented approach to hiring.

On a very basic level, make sure that your babysitter can pass a background check and has CPR training. That shit is not negotiable. Platforms like New York-based Curated Care try to do all of that hard work for you. They do reference checks, background checks, in-person interviews, and orientations, before what they call their “kid experts” can be onboarded onto their platform. If you can use them, use them. If not, follow their example.



“We have certain criteria that are just black and white and they have to meet that. Red flags beyond that are pretty nuanced,” says Curated Care co-founder Erin McConaghy.

The thing Erin thinks parents need to (and often fail to) consider is whether or not their babysitter actually enjoys working with children. “That is palpable during a babysitting session, and makes such a difference in the experience,” she says. To have a passionate and excited babysitter — one who will be helping your kid with homework, teaching them how to play guitar, or helping them explore new science projects — is no laughing matter. Erin believes that great babysitters have to have creative or educational

training, one that can keep kids entertained and learning. But of course, there are the hard-to-define aspects of picking a babysitter.

“So much of it just comes down to personality. Is this somebody that you really want around your child, and is this really someone you want around you as a mom and dad?” Erin asks. While background-check services and platforms like Curated Care can do their own personality tests, it is always up to you, the parent, to decide if you vibe with the person who is gonna be around your kid when you’re not and responsible for their wellbeing.



There's also nothing wrong with having more than one babysitter and taking the pressure off of yourself to find that "perfect person" who will be available full-time.

"Maybe you want someone to teach guitar on Monday and Wednesdays, and you want someone to do Spanish on Fridays, or your afterschool pick-up," Erin says. It's okay to want more than one person around your kid. It could even help their interests grow.

Now, all of that said, being tasked with finding a babysitter who is passionate, qualified, that you get along with, is responsible, can play guitar, drive, and is reliable is no easy task. Certainly, your 13-year-old neighbor doesn't fit that bill. But if you really, really, really need to get away, one night won't hurt. Right?

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