

SAFESITTER

Facilitator Guide

for

Intro to Safe Babysitting

Safe Sitter, Inc. National Headquarters

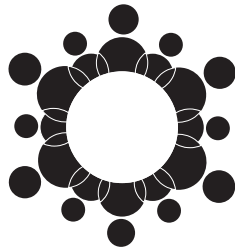
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SAFESITTER

Instructions

ABOUT SAFE SITTER®

Safe Sitter, Inc. is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to providing life skills, safety skills, and child care training to all youth in order to build safer communities. Safe Sitter® programs teach young teens the skills they need for when they are home alone, watching younger siblings, or babysitting.

Safe Sitter, Inc. was founded in 1980 by Patricia A. Keener, M.D. For more information, please visit our website at safesitter.org.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Safe Sitter's *Intro to Safe Babysitting* is designed to be a 60-minute program for students in grades 6-8, facilitated by a parent or adult volunteer. This program provides students with a glimpse into the responsibilities of a babysitter.

Completing this program does not mean that a student is ready to babysit. Only the student's parents can make that decision, based on the maturity, skills, experience, and confidence level of their child. However, this program will help students learn about child development, child care duties, and behavior management, so that when they are ready to babysit, they are better prepared with the knowledge and skills they need in order to be safe, nurturing caregivers.

For more information, students can go to safesitter.org and find a Safe Sitter® class near them. Safe Sitter® classes prepare students to be safe while home alone, watching younger siblings, and babysitting; and includes more information and skills practice related to safety skills, first aid & rescue skills, child care skills, and life & business skills.

USING THIS GUIDE

Your Facilitator's Guide will lead you step-by-step through presenting this program. Each student must have an *Intro to Safe Babysitting* Student Booklet and a pencil or pen. The program begins with a Guided Discussion. The facilitator should follow the script provided.

- **Facilitator lines are in bold.**
- (Suggested student answers are in parentheses.)
- [Facilitator instructions appear in brackets.]

Also included in this program is a Demonstration and Practice of Diapering. For this activity, students will need to have a soft-bodied doll. Students can bring a doll from home for this activity. Facilitators should provide diapers for the students to use during the activity.

Thank you for teaching *Intro to Safe Babysitting* to your group. If you have questions at any time, contact Safe Sitter, Inc. National Headquarters at 317.596.5001 or safesitter@safesitter.org.

Welcome

Welcome to *Intro to Safe Babysitting* by Safe Sitter®! Let's open our booklets to page 4. Babysitting is a big responsibility. When you babysit, you're responsible for a child's life.

This program will give you a glimpse into the responsibilities of a babysitter, including how to care for children of different ages, and how to handle common behavior issues while babysitting. However, there is a lot more to learn about safe babysitting, including safety rules, how to handle emergencies, first aid and rescue skills, and good business practices. Before babysitting, make sure that you and your parent agree that you have the knowledge and skills that are required to be a safe and responsible babysitter.

We're going to learn about three things today:

1. We're going to learn about the characteristics, needs, and behaviors of the different age groups of children. We call this **Ages and Stages**.
2. We're going to learn how to care for children, including the four routines that the BEST babysitters should know about: **Bedtime, Entertainment, Snacks/Meals, and Toileting**.
3. We're going to learn how to manage the behavior of children, and what to do if there is a behavior issue.

Are you ready to get started?

Ages and Stages

There is a lot to do when you are caring for younger children. What are some things you might have to do if you are **babysitting an infant?** (Change diapers, bottle feed, put down for a nap...)

Do you have to do those things when you are babysitting a school-age child? (No.)

So we can see how different ages and stages of children require different care.

Let's look at page 7 of your booklet. We can see that children can be divided into four major age groups:

1. Infants, under 1 year
2. Toddlers, 1 to 2 years old
3. Preschoolers, 3 to 5 years old
4. School Age, 6 to 10 years old

Each age group is different. For example, infants communicate by crying or cooing, while toddlers communicate using simple words or phrases like "No" or "Me do it" when they talk. By the time a child is a preschooler, they usually enjoy talking and especially like to ask questions.

Before we turn the page, notice the warning at the bottom. I want to remind you that infants require a lot of care, and they depend completely on you to stay safe and healthy. Make sure that you have two years of experience caring for older infants and children before you babysit an infant who is less than six months old.

Turn to page 8. The Safe Sitter® Guide to Child Development gives you information about each age group: Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, and School Age. This information will help you understand what each age group needs from you.

Let's practice using the Safe Sitter® Guide to Child Development by answering some questions. **Raise your hand when you think you know the answer.** [After you ask each question, give students some time to consult their booklet and raise their hands.]

- **What age group can walk, run, and use riding toys?** (Preschoolers.)
- **Can you tell a toddler to stay in a chair after you leave the room and trust that they will do that?** (No; toddlers are too young to know or follow the rules.)

- **What age groups need constant watching?** (Infants, toddlers, preschoolers.)
- **What age group needs a reminder to wear a helmet when riding their bike?** (School age.)
- **Can you leave a 5-year-old alone to play in a fenced-in yard?** (No; preschoolers require constant watching.)

Now, turn to page 10. In front of you is another chart, called the **Safe Sitter® Guide to Child Care Duties**.

Notice that the **Safe Sitter® Guide to Child Care Duties** has a column for each age group, and in each column there is information on caring for that age group. Notice that the younger the child, the more the sitter must do for the child.

There is a matching activity in the upper left-hand corner of your booklet. Using your chart to help, try to match the age to the behavior.

[Give students up to one minute to complete the activity.]

Let's take a moment to go over this activity together.

- **What age is most likely to need everything to be done by you?** (Infants.)
- **What age is most likely to be resistant?** (Toddlers.) [Point out to students how many times the word “resist” is in the Toddlers column.]
- **What age is most likely to be cooperative but need frequent reminders?** (Preschoolers.) [Point out that preschoolers are a good age group to start with when students begin babysitting because they usually cooperate.]
- **What age is most likely to know the rules, but push the rules?** (School age.) [Point out that school-age children may push the rules because they are the closest to the babysitter’s age.]

Let's see if you can answer a few more questions using your chart:

- **What age group loves pretending and listening to stories?** (Preschoolers.)
- **What age group has a short attention span and enjoys simple games?** (Toddlers.)
- **What age groups need reminders to use the bathroom?** (Preschoolers and also younger school-age children.)
- **What age group depends completely on you to be fed, entertained, put down for naps, and kept clean and dry?** (Infants.)

Good job! Now we're ready to learn about caring for children.

Child Care Essentials

If you turn the page, you'll see that your booklet tells you how to provide the **BEST** care. Notice that **B-E-S-T** is also an acronym for the four routines you'll need to know for each age group:

B – Bedtime

E – Entertainment

S – Snacks/Meals

T – Toileting

Remember that the **BEST** babysitters know the child's routines, so if you are babysitting, you need to ask the employer about **Bedtime, Entertainment, Snacks and Meals, and Toileting**.

- **Read the information for Bedtime.** [Pause and give students some time to read.] **How should you put an infant down to sleep?** (On their back.)
- **Read the information for Entertainment.** [Pause and give students some time to read.] **Why is it dangerous to let children play with latex balloons?** (They can accidentally inhale the balloon or pieces of the balloon and it can block their airway.)

- **Read the information for Snacks/Meals.** [Pause and give students some time to read.] **Why is it dangerous to play games or make children laugh while they are eating?** (They can choke if they laugh or giggle with a mouthful of food.)

On page 13, there is a list of 10 steps to changing diapers. Earlier, we talked about how diapering was part of babysitting an infant. Now we get to practice that skill. Have any of you ever changed an infant's diaper?

[Some students who have younger siblings or who have some experience babysitting may have experience in changing diapers.]

The most important thing about diapering an infant is to stay with the infant at all times. Never leave an infant unattended. Infants can roll and move around at different times, so it's important to never leave them alone, even for a second. For the same reason, the safest place to change an infant's diaper is on the floor.

Demonstration and Practice

Let's practice on your dolls. First, I'm going to demonstrate, and then all of you will get to practice.

[Read each of the 10 steps out loud as you demonstrate on a doll and have students practice each step along with you.]

1. **Choose a safe place to change the infant's diaper – on the floor, using a changing pad or towel.**
2. **Make sure you have all the supplies you need (clean diaper, wipes, etc.) within reach first.**
3. **To remove the dirty diaper, undo the tabs first and gently slide the diaper from under the infant's bottom.**
4. **Gently wipe the infant from front to back with a washcloth or wipe. Be sure to get the little folds and creases clean.**
5. **Pat the infant dry with a clean washcloth or wipe to prevent diaper rash.**
6. **Gently lift the infant's legs with one hand and slide a clean diaper under infant's bottom with the other hand. Be sure you have the side with the adhesive tabs underneath the infant.**
7. **Before you fasten the tabs, make sure the front of the diaper is centered between the legs and pulled up to the same level as in the back – usually around the level of the belly button in the front.**
8. **To prevent leaks, bring the adhesive strips around the back and fasten them snugly on the front of the diaper so there are no gaps. Be careful not to stick the adhesive tape on the infant's skin.**
9. **Roll up the old diaper (and wipes) onto itself in a ball – fasten the tabs to secure it. Dispose of the old diaper and wipes as directed by the employer. One option is to put the old diaper in a plastic bag and tie it closed. Then put it in the trash.**
10. **Always wash your hands with soap and water after you have disposed of the diaper.**

Note to Facilitator:

Remind students to treat their doll as if it were a real child. Remind them to support a baby's head and neck.

Don't forget the final step of changing diapers: Always wash your hands with soap and water after you have disposed of the diaper. At the bottom of page 13, there are instructions for washing your hands.

How long should you spend rubbing your hands with soap? (About 15-20 seconds – about the same amount of time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.)

Great! Let's turn the page.

Now we're going to talk about how to entertain the children you're babysitting. Keeping children entertained can be challenging for a babysitter, especially if you're babysitting more than one child. In addition, children have different entertainment interests depending on their age and stage.

On page 14, Safe Sitter® has compiled some entertainment ideas for each age group.

Let's look at Infants. Infants have short attention spans, so they are often only interested in an activity for a few minutes at a time. What kind of activities do infants enjoy? (They enjoy nursery games such as Peek-a-Boo and Patty-Cake, or simple activities such as a walk around the house or a stroller ride.)

Toddlers also have short attention spans, and it can be hard work to keep a toddler entertained. What are some games or activities you can play with toddlers? [Students may answer any of the ideas under the Toddlers column.]

Preschoolers often have favorite toys and play activities. What are some games you can play with preschoolers? [Students may answer any of the ideas under the Preschoolers column.]

School-age children often enjoy playing outside games and sports, but they also may enjoy indoor activities. What inside activities might a school-age child enjoy? [Students may answer any of the Inside Activities ideas under the School Age column.]

You can find more ideas on the Safe Sitter® website or Safe Sitter's Pinterest boards.

Next, we're going to talk about how to manage the behavior of the children you're watching. Let's turn to page 16.

Behavior Management

There are four rules you must follow when caring for children:

1. Be in control of yourself.
2. Be in control of the children.
3. Never use physical punishment like shaking, slapping, spanking, pinching, poking, or hitting.
4. Never hurt with words.

Sometimes children behave in a way that is frustrating to someone taking care of them. Can you give me an example? (Not listening, temper tantrum, crying, whining, fighting with siblings, etc.)

Managing this difficult behavior is often the hardest part about taking care of children. It helps to know that when a child is behaving in a frustrating manner, there is often a reason for that. Why do infants cry? (They may be tired, hungry, unhappy, or wanting attention.)

Being tired, hungry, unhappy, or wanting attention are all reasons that children of any age might act in a way that is frustrating. But depending on their AGE and STAGE, they might act out in different ways.

Look back at the Safe Sitter® Guide to Child Development on page 8. You'll notice that infants cry to communicate, so they will likely cry when they are tired, hungry, unhappy, or wanting attention.

- What age is likely to throw a temper tantrum if they are tired, hungry, unhappy, or wanting attention? (Toddler.)
- What age is likely to hit or throw something if they are tired, hungry, unhappy, or wanting attention? (Preschooler.)
- What age is likely to talk back if they are tired, hungry, unhappy, or wanting attention? (School age.)

Dealing with a child who is crying, throwing a tantrum, or talking back can be frustrating, but there are some tips that can help you. On page 17, your booklet lists six ways to deal with this kind of behavior.

Let's look at the colored boxes on page 17.

1. **Provide comfort** – Make sure the child's needs are met. For example, if the child is hungry, prepare a snack or meal. If the child is scared, find their favorite stuffed animal, blanket, or other comforting item.
2. **Distract** – If the child is upset or behaving in a way that is upsetting or frustrating, distract with a funny story or favorite game or activity.
3. **Give choices** – If the child is being resistant, give them 2-3 acceptable choices.
4. **Make a game** – Make a game of a chore like picking up toys to make an unpleasant task more fun.
5. **When...Then** – Promise something the child wants, such as a favorite activity, once the child does what they are supposed to do.
6. **Take a break and start over** – Sometimes a child that is engaging in behavior that is destructive needs to take a short break. A short break helps to stop the behavior and encourages the child to get back in control. Once the break is over, help the child return to play by saying, "Okay, let's start over." [Point out that this tip should never be used for a child under the age of 2. Also, the break should be short – one minute for each year of the child's age.]

Safe Sitter® calls these six tips Behavior Management Tips.

Let's practice using these tips. I'm going to read an example, and I want you to think about what tip I'm describing:

- **David, 10 months old, wakes up from his nap crying. You change his diaper and pick him up and hold him.** (Provide Comfort.)
- **Thomas, 3, cries when his mother leaves. You ask him to show you his favorite toy, and he forgets that he is upset.** (Distract.)
- **Emma, 5, doesn't want to pick up her toys. You say, "Would you like to put away your toys by yourself or would you like me to help?"** (Give Choices.)
- **Twin brothers Joshua and Jacob, 4, do not want to get ready for bed. You say, "Let's see who can put on their pajamas the fastest!"** (Make a Game.)
- **Kayla, 6, doesn't want to brush her teeth before bedtime. You say, "When you brush your teeth, then I'll read you a story."** (When...Then.)
- **Madison, 4, continues to break the rules even though you have tried everything to get her to cooperate. You decide Madison needs to take a break for 4 minutes. Then you say, "Let's start over."** (Take a Break/Start Over.)

Most of the time, you can use these tips to handle difficult behavior. But sometimes, you will need help from a back-up adult. A back-up adult is a trusted adult that is close by and available to help you. Who could be a back-up adult for you, if you are babysitting? (Your own parent, the child's parent, or a neighbor.)

A back-up adult can help you with difficult behavior that is more than you can handle; for example, if there is a physical fight between siblings that you cannot stop.

In some instances, you may need to call 9-1-1 because there is a **THREAT TO LIFE**. A threat to life is a **SERIOUS** and **URGENT** behavior problem, and you need to act quickly because someone may get hurt or even die! For example, if a school-age child you were babysitting had a weapon and was threatening to hurt himself, you, or other children, that would be a **THREAT TO LIFE**. If you are babysitting and there is a serious and urgent behavior problem that threatens someone's life, call 9-1-1 and tell the operator:

1. Your name and current location.
2. You are babysitting and this is an emergency!
3. The behavior problem that is serious and urgent.

In your booklet on pages 18, 19, and 20 there is a Behavior Aid Chart that can help you decide how some common behaviors should be handled. The Behavior Aid Chart is organized by age group. Page 18 covers Infants and Toddlers, page 19 covers Preschoolers, and page 20 covers School Age.

I'm going to ask you how you would handle different situations, and I want you to find the answer on your Behavior Aid Chart. [Call on a student or ask for a volunteer to answer each question, and ask the student to read the answer from the Behavior Aid Chart.]

- **How would you handle an infant who was crying?** (Handle yourself. Check to be sure infant is not hungry, wet, sleepy, or in pain. Comfort infant by cuddling, gently rocking, softly talking, slowly walking infant, or offering pacifier. Call back-up adult if infant cries for more than 20 minutes. NEVER shake or punish an infant for crying.)
- **How would you handle a toddler who had a temper tantrum?** (Handle yourself. Ignore child until the tantrum has ended. If child falls to the ground kicking, move things out of the way so child will not be harmed and things won't get broken. When tantrum ends, distract child with game or play.)
- **How would you handle a preschooler who has a potty training accident?** (Handle yourself. Clean child and change child's clothes if needed. Do not scold or tease child.)
- **How would you handle a child that climbed too high in a tree and is now stuck?** (Call 9-1-1.)
- **How would you handle two school-age siblings who were fighting?** (Handle yourself. Settle the argument as fairly as possible. If physical fighting, separate the children. Call back-up adult if you are unable to stop the fight. Call 9-1-1 if serious harm is a risk.)

Great job! Remember to keep your Behavior Aid Chart handy so that you can access it when you need guidance on behavior issues.

Preventing Injuries

Let's look at page 21. Children of all ages need protection from injuries, and as the babysitter, you are responsible for providing that protection. Think of yourself as a bodyguard. What does a bodyguard do? (Look for danger, keep people safe, act to prevent injury or harm.)

You must act like a bodyguard, by looking for danger and preventing injuries before they happen.

Let's talk about how and why injuries happen.

True or False: Injuries happen when: [Read each statement separately and ask students to call out their answer. After they have called out their answer, let them know the statement is True.]

- **Children are too young to understand the risk or danger.**
- **The sitter is not watching the children.**
- **A younger child is imitating older children.**

These are all true! Injuries can happen anytime that the sitter or the child is not paying attention, or the sitter or child doesn't understand the risk or danger. Let's take a moment to read the warnings at the bottom of page 21. [Have students read through the warnings either silently to themselves or out loud, taking turns.]

Good job! Now you're ready to take the quiz on page 22. [Give students several minutes to read the questions in their booklets silently and circle the correct answers with a pen or pencil.]

Are you ready to review your answers?

[Read each question and answer out loud. Answer Key: 1:a, 2:c, 3:d, 4:d, 5:b, 6:b, 7:c, 8:b, 9:d, 10:a]

Great job, everyone! You have just learned a lot about the responsibilities of caring for children!

There are a lot of resources to help you on the Safe Sitter® website, including suggestions for healthy snacks and more ideas for entertaining children of all ages.

[Optional] **Finally, you can use your phone or mobile device to text "safesitter" to 97000 to download the Safe Sitter® Help Sheet, which has important reminders and safety tips.**

Congratulations! You have completed Safe Sitter's Intro to Safe Babysitting program. [Applaud students and hand each student a Child Care Skills patch (optional).]

To learn more about the safety skills, first aid & rescue skills, and business skills that are an important part of babysitting, take a complete Safe Sitter® course at a location near you. Find a class by going to the Safe Sitter® website.

Facilitator FAQs

What is Safe Sitter®?

Safe Sitter, Inc. is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to providing youth with the life and safety skills they need for when they are home alone, watching younger siblings, or babysitting.

Does this course prepare students to babysit?

Intro to Safe Babysitting provides instruction on child development, child care routines, and behavior management. However, babysitters should also be trained in first aid and choking rescue, and all students need preparation in job skills – such as screening jobs and setting fees – before accepting their first babysitting job. Students who complete *Intro to Safe Babysitting* can take a full Safe Sitter® course to learn all of this at a location near them. To find a class, go to safesitter.org/find-a-class/.

Can I share this Facilitator’s Guide with others?

No, this Facilitator’s Guide may not be shared with others. All Safe Sitter® materials and logos are trademarked and copyrighted. No part of the *Intro to Safe Babysitting* course may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means without express written permission of Safe Sitter, Inc.

What is the legal age for babysitting?

Most states do not mandate a specific age. For questions about the laws in your state, check with your state’s office of the attorney general. In addition, many states provide guidance for parents about when a child is old enough to stay home alone or watch younger siblings through the state’s department of child and family services.

What situations are best for beginner babysitters to start with?

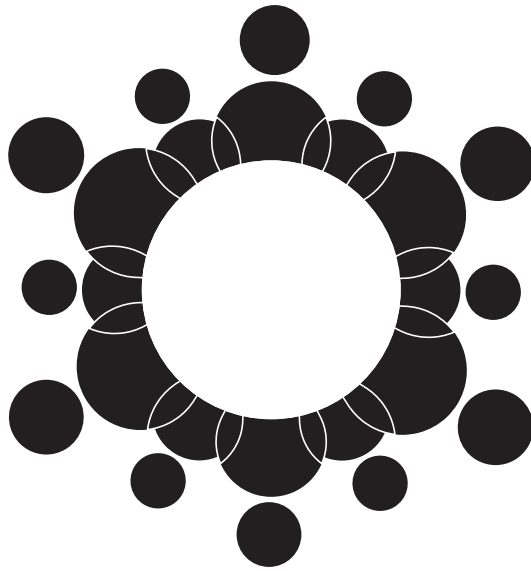
Safe Sitter® suggests that beginning babysitters start with the preschool age (3-5 years old), and limit first jobs to three hours. It’s also helpful for beginning babysitters to start with employers that they know, such as neighbors or friends of the family.

Are there other products that parents or group leaders can purchase for students?

Yes! We have many fun gift options for your students. Check out safesitter.org for a full selection of student products. New items are added regularly!

I have a question that’s not answered here. Can you help?

Of course! Contact Safe Sitter, Inc. National Headquarters at safesitter@safesitter.org with your question or fill out a contact form on our website, and we’ll respond as soon as possible.



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