

## Initial Considerations

Babysitters usually mind your children for a few hours, regularly or sporadically, at your home. Even if the babysitter only looks after your child for a few hours at a time, the babysitter should be familiar with the child and it should not be a different person each time.

*Familyservice* can provide young babysitters who have completed a babysitting course at the Swiss Red Cross.

Leaving your child with a babysitter is a question of confidentiality and both parties (parents and babysitter) should be aware of this. Consider carefully whether you are willing to leave your child/children in the care of a young person and if she can cope with this responsibility.

What might be the responsibilities of the babysitter? For instance:

- Occupying the children, playing with them at home, doing handicrafts, reading stories, etc.
- Taking the children on excursions to the playground or doing other activities at home, depending on their age.
- Eating with the children and clearing the table afterwards.
- Supervising the children with their homework.
- Preparing a light meal for the children, or heating up prepared food, and putting them to bed.

Do not give the babysitter too many duties and try not to overtax young persons with long hours. Consider whether a young person is able to cope with these responsibilities or if it might be better to employ an older childminder.

Having successfully completed a babysitting course may guarantee certain skills, but it does not automatically make a young person the perfect babysitter for your children. There are important personal characteristics that a babysitter should have. These include a love of children, warm-heartedness, a sense of responsibility, intuition and patience. The babysitter must be capable of keeping calm in difficult situations and should not lose their temper easily. The babysitter must be able to reach you in critical situations, e.g. when the child is crying and cannot be consoled.