



L E A D E R ' S G U I D E

# Babysitting Beginnings



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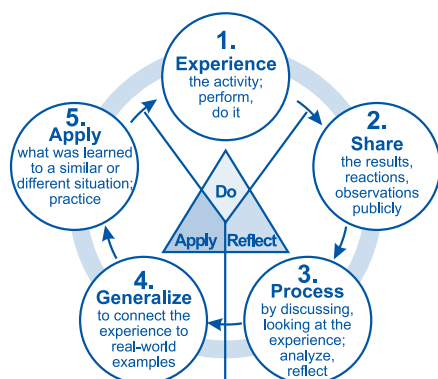
# Introduction

## Experiential Learning

Activities in the *Babysitting Beginnings* project follow a model known as the experiential learning model. The steps in this model are specific and sequential, and they encourage youth to try to do the activity before being told or shown how. Reflection and application questions ask the youth to share what they did, process what was most important about the experience, generalize the life skill and babysitting skill to their own lives, and think through how they could apply the skills to a new situation.

Youth learn best through trial and error and practice. As they learn and discover new concepts and skills on their own, they feel that they are competent and capable of succeeding. The greatest gift adult leaders can give youth is to help them realize that they are capable of learning and mastering new skills.

### Experiential Learning Model



## How Youth Learn

Not all of the youth with whom you work will have success or make progress at the same rate. The following learning characteristics are guidelines to help you plan activities that are appropriate for the age of youth in your group. Remember that these are guidelines, and not all youth of the same age will be at the same developmental stage at the same time. You will need to be sensitive to diverse personalities and abilities.

*Babysitting Beginnings* is recommended for youth who are in grades 6 and older. Before age 12 to 13, most youth are not mature enough nor have the decision-making skills required to be responsible for other children.

### Grades 6 to 8

Young teens at this developmental stage vary widely. Growth spurts beginning with adolescence occur at a wide range of ages, with girls usually maturing before boys. These rapid changes in physical appearance may make some teens uncomfortable. Faster-developing teens may feel thrust into a more adult world they didn't choose. Slower-developing teens may be uneasy about their lack of changes.

Young teens move from concrete to more abstract thinking. Playing with ideas is as much fun as playing sports. Ready-made solutions from adults are

often rejected by young teens in favor of finding their own solutions. Leaders who provide supervision without interference will do well with this age group.

Small groups provide the best opportunity for young teens to test ideas. Justice and equality become important issues. Opinions of peers become more important than those of parents and other adults. Teens enjoy the social interaction and acceptance they receive in groups.

As puberty approaches, young teens begin a roller-coaster ride of hormones and emotions. This time period seems to present the biggest challenge to a young person's self concept. These youngsters face so many changes that they hardly know who they are. Young teens begin to test values and seek adults who are accepting and willing to talk about values and morals. Adults can help by providing self-discovery activities that lead young teens to self-knowledge.

At this stage, adults should continue to avoid comparing young people with each other, and should be careful not to embarrass them. Young people want to be a part of something important and have opportunities to develop responsibility.

## Grades 9 to 12

Most teens of this age know their own special abilities and talents. In most cases, they've already adjusted to the many post-puberty body changes. Mid-teens tend to be wrapped up in themselves and their peer group rather than family, teachers, and other adults. Relationship skills are usually more developed. Dating increases. Acceptance by members of the opposite sex is of higher importance.

Mid-teens begin to think about the future and make realistic plans. Their vocational goals influence the activities they select. Teens set goals based on their personal needs and priorities. Any goals set by others generally are rejected. As they master abstract thinking, they can imagine new things in ways that sometimes challenge adults.

These teens usually can initiate and carry out their own tasks without supervision. In your 4-H group, they can help younger members plan and complete their projects. They should be encouraged to take on this role. A leader can be helpful by arranging new experiences in areas of interest to teens, but must be sure to allow for plenty of input from them. The leader should play the role of advisor/coach for independent workers.

(Adapted with permission from *Electric Excitement*, 4-H CCS Electric Design Team)

## Developing Life Skills Through the Babysitting Beginnings Project

Babysitting Beginnings is a complex project that teaches many life skills, in addition to babysitting techniques. In particular, the following life skills are addressed:

### Making Decisions

#### Importance of the life skill

Youth who make good decisions will learn to recognize how their personal values influence their decisions and those of others. Youth learn to develop an individual decision making process, to set priorities, to make informal decisions, and to evaluate their own decisions.

#### Ideas for developing and practicing the life skill

Give youth experience in identifying their own values that influence decisions. To practice decision making, youth need to have opportunities to identify problems, gather relevant information, compare and select alternative solutions, and explain reasons for their decisions. Allow youth to debate decisions that are not the same, anticipate results of different decisions, and discuss consequences.

## Communicating with Others

### Importance of the life skill

Youth who have learned to communicate well with others are able to exchange ideas and information clearly and minimize confusion for themselves and others. Their personal relationships tend to be satisfying, as they share feelings honestly, resolve conflict in healthy ways, and can both give and receive support from others as situations change.

### Ideas for practicing the life skill

Give youth experience in communicating in a variety of ways. Include opportunities for verbal and nonverbal (body language) communication through art, music, drama and more. Encourage public as well as personal communication. Offer opportunities for exchanging ideas, sharing feelings, and encouraging other youth—even those who are different from themselves.

### Problem Solving

#### Importance of the life skill

Youth with this skill can identify a problem, assess the circumstances, generate possible solutions, and experiment with and evaluate appropriate solutions.

### Ideas for practicing the life skill

Give youth opportunities to identify and resolve problems, and to reflect on the consequences of their actions. There are many role-play scenarios in this project that will engage youth in problem-solving situations.

# Session 1: Babysitting Responsibilities

This session is designed to introduce your group to the responsibilities of babysitting and the expectations of a babysitter. There are several activity suggestions from which to choose. You might not have time to do all of them. Select those that will work best for your group or that are the most interesting to you. Many of the activities in each session rely on inviting resource speakers to come to your meeting. Be sure to follow up with a thank-you note from the kids and/or you.

## Activity Suggestions

1. Discuss with the group favorite memories from early childhood. What were the babysitter's favorite games, toys, sitters, caregivers? Why were they favorites? *(About 10 minutes)*
2. Brainstorm ideas of babysitter's responsibilities. *(About 15 minutes)*
3. Role play babysitter arriving at the house. *(About 5 minutes)*
4. Invite an older teen who is currently babysitting to talk to your group about how he/she conducts the business aspect of the babysitting job. *(About 15 minutes)*
5. Visit a day care center or preschool, if possible, while in session. Observe how the children get along with the other children, play with toys, etc. *(Variable: Helper must schedule a field trip.)*
6. Introduce the "Babysitting Tool Kit." Encourage the babysitters to start planning items to include in their kit. Kits will be shared during the last session. *(About 5 minutes)*

## You will need:

- Nametags
- Pencils
- Folders
- Completed Babysitting Tool Kit

# Session 2: The Business of Babysitting

Review safe ways of finding a babysitting job and what a babysitter needs to know before taking a job.

## Activity Suggestions

1. Invite a parent of a young child to attend a meeting and discuss parental expectations when hiring a sitter. If possible, the parent could bring a child along. *(About 15 minutes)*
2. Review the Babysitting Information Form/Babysitting Record. Discuss. *(About 10 minutes)*
3. Begin a babysitting portfolio, as described in the member's guide. Supply paper, folders, or other supplies to start the project. At the session, the babysitters may want to just decorate the cover of a portfolio. *(About 15 minutes)*

## You will need:

- Copies of the *Babysitting Information Form/Babysitting Record*.
- Paper supplies for a portfolio
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils

# Session 3: Understanding Children

You may choose to divide this session into two because of the amount of information and activities to choose from. Try to include at least one activity from each section. Feel free to replace a creative activity or nutritious snack with one of your own favorites. Don't forget to check out the 4-H Web site at [pa4h.cas.psu.edu](http://pa4h.cas.psu.edu) for additional activity suggestions for all of the sessions.

## Activity Suggestions

1. Demonstrate feeding, diapering, dressing, holding, and putting a baby to sleep. Use a doll or invite a parent who is willing to bring his or her baby to meet with the group. Have the parent demonstrate how to hold a baby's head, feed and diaper the baby, and interact with the infant. Have the babysitters practice holding the doll and changing a diaper. *(About 45 minutes)*
2. Have babysitters bring food and discount store newspaper advertisements to the meeting. Identify the items you would need to buy to take care of a baby. Calculate the cost of meeting the baby's physical needs (i.e. diapers, wipes, food, formula, clothing, etc.) for one month. *(About 30 minutes)*
3. Talk about what to do if you have children in your care who are different ages. How do you keep everybody safe and happy? *(About 15 minutes for discussion)*
4. Role play a babysitter dealing with a child who won't turn off the television and get ready for bed. Explore possible solutions to other problem behaviors. *(About 15 minutes)*

## You will need:

- Life-sized doll or real baby
- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- Burp cloth
- Doll clothing
- Newspaper ads
- Lined paper
- Calculators

# Session 4: Fun with Children

## Activity Suggestions

1. Invite a children's librarian to your meeting. Ask him/her to bring good read-aloud books to share with the babysitters. Each babysitter should practice reading aloud to a partner using books brought by the librarian. If you can't get a librarian to come to the meeting, you might want to hold a meeting at the library and have the babysitters select some books. Child care providers are another great source of information on child care and may be willing to share information with your group. *(About 40 minutes)*

### Tips for Reading Aloud

- Choose a comfortable place to read. Make sure that the light is good and the children can see the pictures.
- Read slowly. The most common mistake readers make is to read too fast.
- Use expression when you read. Children love it if you make your voice growly like Papa Bear's! Nothing is more boring than a monotone.
- Talk about the pictures. Ask the children to find and point to something on each page.
- Talk about the story when you are finished reading. You might want to ask the children to tell the story back to you in their own words as they read the pictures.

2. Have each babysitter learn a finger-play and demonstrate it to the rest of the group. Use one from the project book or make one up. *(About 15 minutes)*
3. Make a picture book for a young child. Find interesting pictures from a magazine and glue them to paper or card stock cut to the size of a small plastic baggie. Insert the picture into the baggie and close. Staple or lace the pictures together with yarn to form a book. If you use staples, cover them with masking tape. This is an easy, inexpensive book to make for children. As you read the book, talk about the pictures. You also can use real pictures of the child's family if you have them. *(About 30 minutes)*
4. Make play dough using the recipe in the project book. *(About 25 minutes)*
5. Make one of the musical instruments suggested in the project book. *(About 15 minutes)*
6. Babysitters can make one of the snack recipes and serve it at your meeting. Provide juice to drink. *(About 15 minutes)*
7. Go for a walk and gather nature items to make a collage. Provide the babysitters with poster board and glue. This is a great activity to do with children of many ages. *(About 30 minutes)*

8. Invite younger siblings (or a parent with young children) to your meeting. Babysitters can plan several activities to do with the children using suggestions from the project book. *(About 30 to 45 minutes)*

### You will need:

- Children's books
- Plastic baggies
- Stapler
- Play dough ingredients
- Supplies for musical instruments
- Snack ingredients
- Large poster board or construction paper for collage
- Glue or tape

## Ages and Stages of Creative Activities

This section is an additional reference to help the sitters develop age-appropriate activities and projects. You may want to duplicate this for your group.

### Infants

Infants (birth to 18 months) learn to grasp, sit up, crawl, and walk. Older babies learn to talk and express themselves using one- or two-word sentences. Activities for this stage of development should encourage creativity. Build on what infants do by offering them a variety of safe materials to play with. For example, when infants use a pan as a drum and hit it with their hands, offer them other things to hit it with, like wooden spoons. Or offer them other drums like plastic bowls or empty boxes.

### Toddlers

Toddlers (18 months to 4 years) have growing hand control and coordination. They should be given opportunities to draw with paint, crayons, and chalk. Toddlers will need to be supervised in these activities to understand the right place for drawing. Young toddlers especially often use walls, sheets, floors, tables, and other surfaces for drawing, if not given guidance. For most toddlers, this is a scribbling stage in art, and a picture rarely looks like a recognizable object. Using muscles and discovering how things feel is what counts. Toddlers enjoy art experiences such as play dough, clay, shaving cream painting, cornstarch and water, and finger painting. Later, toddlers are ready for experiences with scissors and glue. Toddlers need supervision until they learn the rules for using these materials.

Toddlers have a growing vocabulary and can tell short stories. They also can make up simple stories about pictures you show them. Encourage the toddler to talk to you about his/her experiences.

Toddlers can do much with creative movements. They are learning the names of body parts and enjoy activities such as touching toes, eyes, or elbows.

Toddlers can do simple creative movements like imitating animals. They enjoy dancing and, like infants, should be exposed to all kinds of music. Toddlers also enjoy making their own music with simple instruments like bells and sticks. The fantasy play of toddlers comes naturally. They still are learning what is real and what is pretend. Fantasy play—pretending to be the mother or doctor—is how young children learn about the world. It also helps children feel powerful and in control. In make-believe, children get to do the ordering instead of being ordered.

### Preschoolers

Preschoolers (4 to 6 years) have greater muscle control than toddlers. They enjoy the same creative materials, but are able to use them in more complex ways. Most preschoolers know the correct place for drawing, but will sometimes give in to the temptation to write on walls or floors, if left unsupervised for long. By age 4 or 5, some children start drawing recognizable objects, although many details may be missing. By age 6, most children want to explain the pictures they create.

Preschoolers also are good storytellers. They enjoy making books of their stories, drawing pictures to illustrate them, and telling stories in groups with each person telling a part.

The creative movement of preschoolers shows much attention to detail. They enjoy dancing and are aware of others dancing around them. They enjoy making up songs and music with instruments.

The fantasy play of preschoolers also is more complex than that of toddlers. Preschoolers often direct each other on

what to do as they play “Let’s pretend.” For example, one might say, “You be the mom, and I’ll be the dad. . . .” By age 6, preschoolers have developed a good idea about what is real and what is fantasy. Usually around this age, they figure out that Santa Claus, the tooth fairy, and the Easter bunny are not real. Children may choose to go on pretending anyway. Many children of preschool age have imaginary friends. These usually vanish by school age when they get more involved with real, live friends.

### Early School-Age Children

Early school-age children (6 to 9 years) usually draw recognizable pictures. However, they may exaggerate the parts of the picture that are most important to them. They still leave out details. For example, people in their pictures may have hands but no arms; or furniture in their pictures may not be on the floor, but rather floating in space. They do not always use color realistically. People may have red feet and green faces. Animals might be orange. This is okay—the children are being creative!

School-age children are able not only to tell stories, but also to write them down and illustrate them themselves. Early school-age children enjoy reading these and other stories to you.

By this age, many children may be taking classes in gymnastics. Early school-age children often try to imitate the current dance craze in movement and may be learning to play a real musical instrument.

The fantasy play of early school-age children contains some make-believe. By this age, fantasy usually includes action-oriented games like “superheroes” or “horses.” Much of the school-age child’s time deals with daydreaming. Some daydreams become real, as children start to act out stories and plays.

## Session 5: Sitting Safely

Handling emergencies requires thinking and decision-making skills. Parents want to know that their babysitter can stay calm and will contact them and/or the emergency personnel in the event of an accident or emergency. The biggest difficulty for the members in your group may be deciding who to call first: the parent or 9-1-1. It is important to convey that each situation is different and requires making an important decision. But, should they be in doubt, they should call 9-1-1 first and let the emergency personnel know that they are a babysitter and whether or not they have contacted the parents yet. In all cases, the parents should be called as soon as possible, not only because they are responsible for the child, but also because they can give emergency personnel more information and provide clearance for any treatment procedures.

### Activity Suggestions

1. Ask babysitters to look up several types of emergencies in the most recent Red Cross Babysitter's Handbook (or other similar guide), so they know how to use this resource. This handbook is available from your local Red Cross office for a small fee. The book and a special first aid kit for babysitters also can be ordered from [www.redcrossstore.com](http://www.redcrossstore.com), the new online Red Cross store. *(About 15 minutes)*
2. Review the items in a first aid kit and show them how they are used. Syrup of Ipecac and activated charcoal are no longer recommended for home use when poisons are swallowed. Youth should find the current Poison Control Center phone number on-line and write the number in their project book and babysitting kit or order phone stickers to be put near the phone. Emphasize that children should be watched closely so potential hazards are eliminated before they become a problem. *(About 15 minutes)*
3. Conduct a scan of a home or your meeting location for potential hazards. Hazards are most often found when children are babysat in homes where only adults live. Ask your sitters to get on their hands and knees to notice what hazards may appear at the child's level. *(About 15 minutes)*
4. Invite a qualified medical technician or Red Cross representative to a group meeting to demonstrate basic first aid procedures that a babysitter might have to perform before the parents or emergency personnel arrive. *(Variable. Depends on the presentation.)*
5. Role play the situations outlined in the member's guide. Allow the youth to show how they would react if the situations were real. Let small groups complete the role play and then come together for a discussion. Your goal is to give babysitters confidence that they can handle the situation, so be careful how you critique them. Put your suggestions in a context, and give the reasoning behind them.  
  
For example, if there is a fire in an oven or microwave oven (situation), leave the oven closed (suggestion). Once you remove the oxygen, the fire can't burn (explanation). The same is true if you find yourself on fire. You should "stop, drop, and roll," and the lack of oxygen will snuff out the fire (another example of the same principle). If you run, you may increase the oxygen to the fire.  
  
If you don't have time enough for the youth to be involved in the role play situations, you may want to tape others who have done this activity, watch the tape, and discuss whether or not the babysitter in the situation responded well to the emergency.

Successful responses often depend upon careful and accurate communication of the situation, reflected by the tone of voice as well as the words spoken. (*About 30 minutes*)

6. Make a first-aid kit. Many places where children play need a first-aid station for emergency cuts, bumps, and bruises. Each babysitter can develop a basic first-aid kit to take into a home or use at a playground. Obtain training so you'll know how to use these items, or invite a medical professional to your meeting to talk about first aid with your group. (*Variable. Depends on presentation.*)

**You will need:**

- Several copies of the *Red Cross Babysitter's Handbook*
- First-aid kit containers
- Paper and pencil for identifying hazards
- Resource person for first-aid demonstration
- Supplies for the first-aid kit (enough for each participant)

Supply	Use
Sterile gauze (2" and 4") squares	Dress larger cuts, wounds
Adhesive tape roll	Hold dressings in place
Adhesive bandages, different sizes	Dress smaller cuts and wounds
Elastic bandage, 2" wide	Hold dressings in place, wrap ankle, make an arm sling
Scissors and tweezers	Cut cloth, tape, pull out stingers and slivers
Chemical cold pack	Prevent swelling
Clean washcloth	Apply pressure to large cuts
Latex disposable gloves	Protect yourself from germs (Keep a supply for diaper changes)
Antiseptic wipes	Wash small cuts, scrapes, and wounds, wash hands, clean scissors and tweezers
Antibiotic ointment	Disinfect small cuts, scrapes, and wounds

NOTE: These are basic first-aid supplies for the babysitter. Other items may be added as needed.

# Session 6: Sharing Tool Kits and Portfolios

This session is the final meeting. The babysitters bring in their babysitting kits and portfolios to share. It is the final activity of their project. If your group didn't make kits at home, use this session to get them started. You can begin construction and decoration, or at least plan what they will put in the kit during the session. To make a good babysitting kit, ask the babysitters to think about all of the information from the babysitting project—safety, creativity, ages and stages, etc.

Although you should acknowledge the participation and accomplishments of each sitter, note that this project does not certify babysitters. Because of liability concerns, we are not able to graduate “certified” babysitters; however, participants can indicate that they have completed a “babysitting 4-H project” when talking with parents who might hire them.

## Activity Suggestions

1. Share babysitting kits made at home. Divide the group into partners and ask them to evaluate each other's kit. You can use the evaluation in this guide. Ask the babysitters to share their kits with the group. *(Variable, depending on the number of babysitters in the group.)*
2. Share babysitting portfolios or resource collections. *(Variable, depending on the number of babysitters in the group.)*
3. Have a brief ceremony where you acknowledge the accomplishments of each of the babysitters. Any form of recognition is appropriate. A sample recognition certificate is available in this helper's guide. *(Variable, depending on the number of babysitters in the group.)*

## You will need:

- Babysitting kits and/or portfolios
- Certificates or recognition of participation

Check with your county 4-H program to see if there is an opportunity to exhibit this project at a fair. An exhibit could include the babysitting kit with a card indicating the appropriate age level for each activity. You may use the following evaluation at roundup or to judge a fair display or demonstration. Make sure you share these criteria with the sitters!

## 4-H Babysitting Kid Evaluation

Name:

Club or Group:

Kit Items

For Ages

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

	Very Good	Good	Needs Improvement
Appropriate for child's age	3	2	1
Considerations for safety	3	2	1
Cleanliness/neatness	3	2	1
Durability of kit	3	2	1
Creativity with items	3	2	1

You might want to ask each babysitter to demonstrate how to use his/her tool kit with a child. Comment below on the contents in the tool kit based on the criteria above. Suggest that the babysitters visit a child and use the kit.

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# Certificate of Achievement



This recognizes

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Name

for completion of the Babysitting Beginnings 4-H project.  
Congratulations!

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Name

Date

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Leader/Helper

PENNSSTATE



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## **I Pledge:**

My Head to clearer thinking,  
My Heart to greater loyalty,  
My Hands to larger service, and  
My Health to better living,  
For my club, my community,  
My country and my world.