

Babysitter's Clinic

Learning How to Handle Almost Any Emergency

Most of the time babysitting is fun – and profitable. But there's no worse panic a babysitter can experience than suddenly being faced with an emergency and not knowing what to do. Imagine a teenager faced with a child who has swallowed a cleaning fluid, or who has stepped on a nail, or developed a high fever.

These and dozens of other possible crises are a babysitter's nightmare. That's why the community responds so favorably to a babysitter's clinic. Of course you'll see lots of teenagers, but parents and grandparents might also attend.

How to put on the program

1. Determine the location, date, and hours of the event and plan which health and safety experts you'll need to present a well-rounded program. Be sure that the location has adequate parking facilities for participants. You'll find a Saturday probably will work best for teenagers and parents.
2. Contact the health and safety experts you'll need on hand. In addition to EMS professionals, ask for speakers from the local hospital or clinic, the Fire Department, the Police Department or Village Public Safety office, and the Red Cross. Don't forget your local health aide. Contact them at least two or three months before the clinic.
3. When you have confirmed the speakers, meet with them as a group to get their input on the content (first aid, what to do in a medical emergency, how to work with paramedics, EMTs, or other emergency medical personnel, what to do in the event of a fire, how to handle a prowler, etc.) Remind them to be brief, because teenagers can only sit still for so long. Encourage them to look for innovative and exciting way to present their material. You may consider limiting the size of the class. A group of 20 or 30 participants is ideal for role-playing and question and answer sessions, although you may feel more comfortable with a full auditorium.
4. Reserve the space for your program, and make arrangements for any audio-visual equipment you'll need. Ask each speaker for an outline of his or her topic and length of presentation, and then prepare an agenda. A sample agenda may include:
 - Welcome
 - Fire Emergencies

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- Poison Prevention and How to Use a Poison Control Center
 - Infant Care
 - Police Emergency Information
 - CPR (adult and infant)
 - The Heimlich Maneuver
 - Emergency First Aid
 - Childproofing a House
 - Emergency Treatment Authorization Forms (for parents to sign in advance)
 - Important Telephone Numbers (with space for police, fire, ambulance, poison control, parent’s number, family physician, etc.)
5. Determine the minimum age for participants (age 12 is about average) and whether to charge for the clinic. Some have found that a nominal charge works well, \$2 or \$3. If the clinic will run more than two hours, you may want to have participants bring a sack lunch and you can provide soft drinks or juice.
 6. Work with middle school and high school principals to publicize the clinic to teenagers (see sample). Ask teachers to distribute the flyers in 7th through 12th grade classes and post them on school bulletin boards.
 7. Two weeks before the event, send a media memo (see sample) to your daily and weekly newspaper editors. Also send a 30-second radio announcement to your local radio stations.
 8. Ask health associations for first-aid or emergency care literature that you can distribute to participants.
 9. A week before the clinic, have a meeting with the speakers. Review the agenda, tell them how many participants have registered, and make sure you have ordered all the audiovisual equipment you will need.
 10. The day before the clinic, gather all materials and handouts, including registration forms, pencils, and participant handouts. Consider giving participants name tags, consent-to-treat forms, certificates of completion, and course evaluation forms. Develop and distribute a “babysitter’s handbook” for participants if possible. Post signs in various locations around the event telling participants where to go and where to park.
 11. Photograph the event to send to local newspapers (and Southern Region EMS Council!) After the clinic, review the evaluation forms so you can make your program even better next time!

Note: There are three babysitting programs you might take a look at:

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ARC – Babysitting Course

ASHI – CABS (Child Babysitter Safety)

SAFE Sitter® (Safe Sitter, Inc.) Usually offered through hospitals, etc.

The Poison Control Center for Alaska is in Oregon, so getting speakers may be difficult.

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Sample Media Memo for Babysitter's Clinic

(Your Logo)

MEDIA MEMO

- WHAT:** A Babysitter's Clinic that will teach teens and adults what to do if a child chokes on food, swallows poison, steps on a nail, or how to react if a fire starts or a prowler is outside. Participants will learn fist aid, how to childproof a house, and dozens of other "survival" tips for emergencies.
- WHEN:** (Day, Date, and Hours)
- WHERE:** (Location, Address, Presentation Room)
- WHO:** EMS personnel from (your service name) will present the program, along with police, fire, and others!
- WHY:** A medical emergency is a babysitter's nightmare. Most people do not know what to do in an emergency, how to call for help, or how to work with paramedics and other emergency personnel. They don't know what to do while help is on the way. With poison or fire, seconds count! This clinic will give teens and adults the knowledge they need when faced with an emergency. For additional information, call: (contact, organization, and telephone number)

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Sample 30-Second Radio Sport Babysitter's Clinic

(Your Logo)

Babysitter's Clinic

30-second Announcement

How good are you at handling an emergency? What if a child you were babysitting swallowed cleaning fluid. . . or stepped on a nail. . . or started choking and couldn't breathe? You can learn what to do in these emergencies and dozens more at (your service's name) Babysitting Clinic, on (day and date, from (hours). Emergency medical professionals and fire, and police, will teach you how to deal with almost any emergency. To sign up call (name) at (telephone number).

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Sample Copy

Babysitter's Clinic Flyer for Teens

Don't Panic

It's your worst babysitting nightmare: the child swallows cleaning fluid. . . or steps on a nail . . . or develops a high fever. And you're in charge.

But you don't have to panic. You can learn how to deal with these emergencies and dozens of others at the (your service name) Babysitter's Clinic on (day and date from (hours). Emergency physicians, nurses and EMS personnel will teach you how to handle the situation until professional help arrives. Experts from the police and fire department, , the Red Cross, and others, also will be on hand to give you important information.

The fee for the clinic is just (cost), but attendance is limited, so sign up today by calling (name, title, organization, phone number). The (day-long/half day) program will be held at (location), so bring your lunch – we'll furnish the soft drinks. You'll be awarded a certificate of completion at the end of the day. So . . . don't panic. Join us for the facts.

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