

When a Family Member Cares For Your Child

When you need to find child care, sometimes the best choice is someone in your own family. Why?

- ✓ Because a family member knows and loves your child.
- ✓ Because a family member may be more able to care for your child at night or on weekends.
- ✓ Because your family member may charge you less.
- ✓ Because your child may be more at ease with someone he knows.

How will it work?

- ✓ Talk it over. Make sure your family member really wants to care for your child and is able to do so.
- ✓ Write down what you agree on: how much you will pay and when, if you will pay when your child stays home with you, if you will pay when your family member is sick or on vacation, what time you will drop off and pick up your child, what your child will eat and who will buy the food...

Helping Your Family Member Do a Good Job

Taking care of your child is hard work. Your family member may need help. Ask her what she thinks might be helpful.

See if you can find a good time and place for her to take a first aid and CPR class. Offer to pay the fees.

You can go to the library and look for books for her that tell about things to do with young children to help them grow and learn.

If your family member cares for other children as well as yours, she can get a child care license. It will take time and effort, but it may be worth it. She may be able to get training and help in paying for the children's meals.

Is it safe for your child?

- ✓ Make sure that your family member's home is safe.
- ✓ Medicines, household cleaners, and other poisons should be out of your child's reach.
- ✓ Your family member should know what to do if there is a fire - how to get your child out quickly and safely and who to call.
- ✓ Your baby should be placed on his back to sleep.

What If There is a Problem?

Sometimes you may not agree with your family member on how best to care for your child. Maybe you want your child to play outside more. Or your family member thinks your baby is ready to be potty trained but you want to wait. Here are some tips to keep peace in the family:

- ✓ Find a good time and place to talk about it.
- ✓ Thank your family member for helping you with your child care.
- ✓ Show respect for your family member's ideas.
- ✓ Tell your family member that you want the best care for your child and you know that she does, too. Perhaps you can agree.
- ✓ Decide if you need to start looking for other child care. If so, let your family member know how lucky you feel to have had her help.

Is it time for a change?

- ✓ Children grow and their needs change. Sometimes care that was perfect for your little child no longer works as well when he is older.
- ✓ You may find that a family member can no longer keep up with your active child. Or if you've had another baby, perhaps it is too much for your family member to take of both children.
- ✓ You may need to make a change if your work hours or days change.
- ✓ In some cases, the care just does not work out. But family is still family. Try to end the care without blame or bad feelings. Your child has had the love of a grandmother, aunt, or some other special family member, and that is what counts.