

FACT SHEET:

Category:
Life After ABI
Parenting

Audience:
Person with an ABI

**For more information
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(ABIOS)**

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ABIOS Manager



ABIOS

Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service



Who to Ask for Help When You Need a Break

Introduction

As much as you love your child, sometimes you need a break from them. This is important for both you and your child. However, you need to make sure the person looking after your child is a safe and trustworthy person. Sometimes you are able to ask family, friends or a trusted neighbour to look after your child. The person you ask to look after your child must

- like children
- be trustworthy
- be able to keep your child safe
- be responsible

At times you will be able to use child care services or out-of-school-hours care.

Depending on the services in your area, you can access these on a casual basis. To use these you have to enrol your child in the service prior to needing it. At other times you will need to pay someone to look after your child in your home. You may consider putting away a little money each week to pay for a babysitter when the need arises.



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When you need to hire a babysitter

To make sure your child is safe you should give proper instructions and information to the babysitter. Thinking about safety will help you avoid serious mistakes that might cause injury or even cost a life. The baby-sitter you hire should be old enough and responsible enough to handle any emergency.

It is important to consider a babysitter before you need them so that you can plan and organise. You will need to evaluate the person you are considering and prepare your own child.

Employing a babysitter

- To find a babysitter, you can ask
 - ◇ your neighbours around your suburb
 - ◇ co-workers
 - ◇ other parents at the school or child-care centre
 - ◇ go through an agency. You can find these online. Check customer feedback and ratings.



- If you are employing a babysitter privately, ensure you pay the babysitter a fair rate of pay. You can ask other parents to find out what is a fair rate. You can also ask the babysitter themselves. Even if you are employing a babysitter on a 'trial' basis you need to pay them for their time.
- You should not expect the babysitter to do anything else other than to look after your children. They should not be expected to do housework.
- Your sitter should:
 - ◊ Like children
 - ◊ Be trustworthy
 - ◊ Be able to keep themselves and your child safe
 - ◊ Be able to actively watch and entertain your child
 - ◊ Have the patience to handle difficult behaviour
 - ◊ Be able to stay calm in an emergency
 - ◊ Be competent in rescue skills such as care of a choking child
 - ◊ Know when to ask for help
 - ◊ Be willing to accept responsibility for your child's life
- Check age, references and experience of your possible babysitter. Do not hire a person if you cannot check their references. Do not hire a stranger. Call the person providing the reference and ask questions. Ask specific questions like:
 - ◊ Do their children like the sitter?
 - ◊ Did the sitter follow the house rules?
 - ◊ Has there been any unpleasant event?
 - ◊ Is there anything else you need to know?
- Pay attention to your instincts about trustworthiness and fit with your child.

Preparing for a babysitter

- Have a first aid kit or a good stock of first aid supplies on hand. (See What you can include in your first aid supplies)
- Leave food and drink out for them so that they can give their full attention to the children rather than having to prepare food.
- Leave written information on emergency contacts, children's allergies, and

medication your child may require, and any other house rules they may need to refer to. Refer to Babysitting Checklist

When the babysitter arrives

Ask the new babysitter to come early so that you can:

- ◊ Introduce them to your children
- ◊ Show them around your house
- ◊ Discuss the house rules and your expectations of them
- ◊ Allow time for your child to settle before you leave
- Show them the exits in case of an emergency, how to use any appliances, and where the emergency supplies including the first aid kit, and torches for a blackout
- Let the person know the house rules as is necessary: mealtimes, bath times, bedtime, when watching the children outdoors, bike safety rules, playgrounds, and fire prevention.
- Let the babysitter know what time you expect to return. If you are running more than 15 minutes late, contact them and let them know
- Minimise unpleasant tasks. For example, when you are going out at night-time have your children fed and dressed in their pyjamas.



- Reduce any unsafe tasks. For example, asking your sitter to cook a meal.
- Provide a special treat or snack for your children while you are away. For example watching a special DVD
- Let the sitter know what she may use for herself (eg food, books, and phone). Set the rules about who is allowed to enter the home in your absence.

What you can include in your first aid supplies

These are a few ideas of things you might like to include in your first aid supplies if you do not purchase a commercially available first aid kit.

- Assorted band aids
- Assorted sized bandages for different purposes
- Rolls of 2-inch gauze and small and large gauze pads
- Washing agents for wounds like Dettol
- Scissors
- Adhesive tape to apply bandages
- Cotton swabs to apply medications and ointments
- Ice pack for sprains and strains
- Heat pack
- Sling
- Betadine antiseptic
- Sunscreen
- Lotions or tea-tree oil to relieve pain and itching from sunburn and bites
- Cotton make-up pads to assist with applying lotions or wiping injured areas
- Children's and adults pain and fever medication
- Decongestant Medication
- Hydralite ice-blocks for upset stomachs (keep a couple in the freezer)
- Insect repellent to protect against bites when going outdoors (especially at dusk)
- "Sting ease" to relieve pain from stings such as ant stings
- Tweezers
- Thermometer
- Vaseline
- Nappy rash cream
- Baby wipes



Babysitting Checklist

In case of emergency ring 000

Family Name : _____

Children's Names and Ages:

Medicare Number : _____

Family GP name and contact number:

Home Address:

Home phone number: _____

Nearest cross street: _____

I can be reached at:

Location: _____

Mobile Phone: _____

I expect to be home at:

Nearby friend/relative/neighbour to be contacted in case of emergency:

If you take the time to prepare yourself, the sitter and your children you will ensure that your children are safe, they may enjoy their time with the sitter and you can relax and enjoy the break.

Resources:

In the development of the babysitting checklist within this “Who to ask for help when you need a break” fact sheet, a number of ideas from websites were incorporated. Here are websites to provide further ideas:

- Safe babysitting:
<https://kidsit.com/how-to-be-a-safe-babysitter>
- Child Development Institute :
https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/family-living/choosing_baby_sitter/
- Kids Health:
<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/babysitter.html>
- Hiring a Baby sitter:
<https://safesitter.org/>
- Checklist for preparing a new babysitter:
<https://www.verywell.com/what-to-put-on-a-babysitter-checklist-620333>
- Before you leave the kids:
<https://www.verywell.com/before-you-leave-the-kids-1298381>

See other Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service (ABIOS) parenting Information sheets at
<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/abios/>

Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that in the development of the ABIOS Parenting fact sheets we have incorporated ideas from the 1-2-3 Magic Program and The Triple P program.



Notes:

A large rectangular area with a green border and horizontal lines, intended for taking notes.