

Illinois
Extension



Illinois 4-H

BABYSITTING PROJECT

RESOURCES





WELCOME

Welcome to your babysitting journey! Babysitting is a great way to learn responsibility, build relationships, and earn money. A successful babysitter needs to be a responsible role model, know the basics about kids and child care, be safety-minded, and know how to engage and entertain kids. This guide will help you identify resources to help you learn to be a safe, engaging, and successful babysitter.

Explore the resources available, from books, to videos, to in-person and online certification classes, and choose the ones that are right for you!

Want help planning your learning journey? Use the Project Plans available for different ages on the Illinois 4-H website at go.illinois.edu/memberresources.

We encourage you to identify an adult in your life that can help guide you in your learning. There are tools for this helper in the back of this resource guide!

You decide if you want to gain broad babysitting knowledge, or go deep and learn about a specific topic, like age-appropriate toys, or infant and child first aid. At the end of your learning journey, you're invited to share something you learned at your local 4-H show or fair.

We hope you enjoy your learning journey!



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BABYSITTING BOOKS

Books can be great resources to learn about babysitting, and have handy to reference on the job! Explore some options below that can help teach you about babysitting and child development. Don't feel limited by our list of suggestions. You can find other resources from your local bookstore or library. When choosing resources, its important to think about how trusted the writer is. Look for resources from universities, medical experts, government agencies, and other trusted sources.

DO I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE YOUR TEEN BABYSITTER?

4-H partnered with the Army Child & Youth Services to develop a babysitting curriculum designed to help middle school and teenage youth learn skills to be safe, caring, and capable babysitters. The free curriculum features lessons on safety, first aid and CPR, child development, nutrition, entertaining children, and the business of babysitting.

Download a copy at <https://go.illinois.edu/4HTeenBabysitting>.

4-H CHILD DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY GUIDES

Shop 4-H sells a Child Development curriculum series that features 4 different books to help you develop knowledge regarding children in the areas of development, health and safety, food and nutrition, discipline, and families and careers.

Learn more about the content of the different books below and order them online at <https://shop4-h.org/collections/child-development-curriculum>.

- **Child Development Level A: Building a Bright Beginning** - This book focuses on learning about infants and toddlers (birth to age 3). Explore health, safety, development, and food and nutrition tips for this age group.
- **Child Development Level B: Building Blocks of Learning** - This book focuses on learning about pre-school age children. Topics include safety, health, nutrition, family time, and making good choices for this group.
- **Child Development Level C: Building a Strong Foundation** - This book focuses on youth ages 6 to 12. Explore how these youth think and act and how to keep them safe. You'll learn about appropriate activities for this age group, as well as nutrition and safety tips.
- **Child Development Level D: Building Relationships Toward a Brighter Tomorrow** - This book focuses on more advanced learning for youth who have mastered previous levels. It has info on working with youth of all ages. Topics include problem solving, safety, health, and nutrition.





BUILDING BETTER BABYSITTERS TEEN WORKBOOK

This workbook for teens from Nebraska 4-H contains information to support youth who are learning how to be great sitters. The book covers safety, appropriate activities, nutritious snacks, and more. It is intended as a workbook for youth taking the Building Better Babysitters course, but has lots of good standalone content.

It is available for purchase as a digital download on the UNL Marketplace at <https://marketplace.unl.edu/extension/building-better-babysitters-teen-workbook.html>.

AMERICAN RED CROSS BABYSITTING HANDBOOK



The American Red Cross babysitting training has a great handbook for babysitters that features sections on the business of babysitting, safety, ages and stages of child development, childcare, emergency procedures and basic first aid.

The book is distributed to participants in the certification courses, but can also be ordered on their website at <https://www.redcross.org/store/books-and-dvds>.





BABYSITTING CERTIFICATION COURSES

One way to learn how to be a great babysitter is to take a certification course on babysitting. Courses may be offered in-person in your community, or can be taken online. Don't be limited by the options below! If you find an appealing course locally that is offered by a trusted organization, take it! Organizations that may offer courses include: hospitals, park districts, fire protection districts, churches, libraries, and more.

AMERICAN RED CROSS BABYSITTING COURSES

The American Red Cross has been a trusted provider of babysitting training for years. Their courses are available for youth ages 11 and older. In Illinois, they offer 3 different courses. Some courses are available online, while others may be available as an in-person training near you. Courses have a participation fee. All courses offer a certificate of completion that is valid for two years.

See information on course offerings below or browse their website to learn more at <https://www.redcross.org/local/illinois/take-a-class/babysitting>.

- **Babysitting Basics** - This online course is a great introduction to babysitting. It covers topics such as basic childcare, what to do in an emergency, how to choose age-appropriate activities, recognizing and handling a variety of child behaviors, and how to start a babysitting business.
- **Babysitter's Training** - This in-person course provides youth who want to babysit with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide safe and responsible care to children and infants. This class helps youth develop leadership skills as they learn how to develop a babysitting business, how to keep themselves and others safe, how to help youth behave, and how to care for children of different ages. Basic first aid is taught in this course.
- **Advanced Child Care Training** - This online course is designed for adults and youth who have already completed the Babysitter's Training. The course provides training in leadership, child behavior and discipline, professionalism, safety, and basic childcare (bottle feeding, holding, etc.). The course is interactive and includes activities and videos.



SAFE SITTER TRAINING

Safe Sitter is a babysitting course that is frequently offered by various community organizations, such as libraries, hospitals and park districts.





See information on course offerings below and browse their website to find a course being offered near you at <https://safesitter.org/find-a-class/>

- **Intro to Safe Babysitting** - This 1-hour course is designed for middle-school age youth. In it students learn tips to manage child behavior, the ages and stages of child development, and how to change a diaper.
- **Safe Sitter Essentials** - This 5-hour course covers safety skills, child care skills, first aid and rescue skills, and life and business skills. More in-depth versions of this course may be offered near you that include additional CPR and safety training.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY TRAINING

Though a number of babysitting courses contain basic first aid training, it may be helpful to take additional first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training to be better prepared for emergencies. Look for courses offered near you from hospitals and other trusted community organizations. Some potential options are listed below.

- **American Red Cross Courses** - The American Red Cross offers classes specifically focused on first aid and CPR for youth and babies. This includes their Child & Baby First Aid/CPR/AED online course that covers first aid emergencies common to babies and children, including choking, bleeding, shock, and overdose. The course also teaches CPR and how to use an AED on children and babies. Browse this and other courses at <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/online-safety-classes>.
- **American Heart Association Courses** - The American Heart Association offers both online and in-person courses on first aid and CPR. Explore their course catalog to find an option that works for you at <https://cpr.heart.org/en/course-catalog-search>.





INTERNET RESOURCES

Websites and internet videos can be a great source of information about caring for kids! Look for info at the websites below, or explore on your own. Just remember to look for content from trusted sources!

BABYSITTER BOSS YOUTUBE CHANNEL

This high-quality YouTube channel from the Safe Sitter organization provides you all you need to know about babysitting, from surviving temper tantrums, to changing a diaper, to getting kids to bed - they've got you covered. Browse 3 seasons of content packaged in small, easy-to-digest bites!

Find them on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/@BabysitterBoss>.



BETTER KID CARE

This online resource from Penn State Extension features resources to help people caring for kids do it better! They have a ton of awesome content on their website including the items below.

- **ABCs of Growing Healthy Kids** - Downloadable info sheets about healthy nutrition and feeding practices from birth to age 6. Special tip sheets cover topics like picky eating and healthy snacks.
- **Explore and Engage** - Downloadable activities to support engagement, learning, and development. Topics include cooking with children, creativity, physical development, social-emotional learning, and STEM.
- **Families Count** - Short articles on a variety of child-centered topics with practical tips to improve your interactions with youth. Topics include art appreciation, curiosity, misbehavior, and more.
- **On Demand Distance Education** - Online courses covering a variety of topics related to caring for youth, including responding to emergencies, active play, dealing with challenging kids, and more. Courses are targeted at adults working with kids, but are appropriate for teens. They are free, but a nominal fee is charged if participants want to receive a certificate of completion.



Browse all this content on their website at <https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare>.

ILLINOIS CARES FOR KIDS

This website from the Illinois Department of Human Services has resources about children based on their ages. You can learn about child behaviors and development at different ages, as well as how to support youth nutrition, fitness, and social emotional health.

Visit their website to explore the resources available at <https://www.illinoiscaresforkids.org/>.





ILLINOIS EARLY LEARNING PROJECT

This website from the University of Illinois Early Childhood Collective is a source of research-based information on childcare. Their site has a variety of tip sheets on various topics related to the skills needed to be a good babysitter, including activity ideas, healthy eating, communication, feelings, fuss management, safety, and more. They also have blog posts, videos, and podcasts you can learn from!

Visit their website to learn more at <https://illinoisearlylearning.org/>.



POSITIVE PARENTING TIPS

This website from the Centers for Disease Control provides information and tips about youth at different ages of development. Explore each age group and learn about children's development at that age, along with tips for communicating and interacting with children of that age and how to keep them safe.

Visit their website at <https://www.cdc.gov/child-development/positive-parenting-tips/index.html>.



TEENSHEALTH

This website from the Nemours Children's Health Foundation has some great articles about babysitting and other health topics, written by medical professionals. Some articles to check out include 'How to Be a Great Babysitter', 'What to Do in an Emergency' and 'What Babysitters Need to Know About Safety'.

Explore information on their website at <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/babysit.html>.





ACTIVITY RESOURCES

Looking for activities to do with youth you are babysitting? Check the resources below for fun, age-appropriate, and educational options to get you started!

101 WAYS TO KEEP KIDS BUSY

Better Kid Care has a great article with 101 idea to keep kids busy, from songs, to games, to crafts. This a great resource to help you keep kids happy and engaged.

Browse the list of ideas at <https://extension.psu.edu/better-kid-care-101-ways-to-keep-kids-busy>.

PBS KIDS LEARN & GROW

PBS Kids offers a set of activity resources focused on helping kids build life skills while having fun. Browse their website to get ideas on activities you can use with the youth you babysit. Search activities by topic and age group. Lessons also include tips on working with youth of various ages.

Check out all their offerings at <https://www.pbs.org/parents/learn-grow>.

SCIENCE BUDDIES STEM ACTIVITIES

Science Buddies is a website that promotes science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning. They have a ton of STEM-focused activities you can do with kids, from science experiments, to engineering challenges, to demonstrations that will blow kids' minds.

Learn more at <https://www.sciencebuddies.org/stem-activities>.

TERRIFIC TEACHABLE MOMENTS

The free Terrific Teachable Moments app from University of Illinois Extension is a great resource you can use to encourage or discourage specific child behaviors right when they occur. It includes over 150 activity-based mini lessons that can be completed in 10 minutes or less. Once you see a behavior you want youth to reflect on, you open the app and find a lesson. Lessons have a short activity for you to do with the child, then a reflection time, followed by an opportunity for youth to apply what they learned.

Download the app in your phone's app store or learn more at <https://go.illinois.edu/TTMFamily>.





THE BIG BOOK OF CLOVERBUD ACTIVITIES

Are you working with youth ages 5 to 7? 4-H has great resources to support this age group, which we call Cloverbuds. The Big Book of Cloverbud Activities is one of these resources! Purchase this book to get lessons around a variety of topics including art, healthy living, civic education, science, plants, animals, science and technology, and more.

Order the book at <https://extensionpubs.osu.edu/the-big-book-of-4-h-cloverbud-activities/>.





SHOWING YOUR LEARNING

4-Hers are encouraged to demonstrate their learning in this project by making a display, presentation, or video to exhibit at their local county 4-H project show. Consult your county's show book for exhibit rules and guidelines. You can choose to make your project about anything you learned while doing this project! Some ideas of topics you could consider are listed below.

- How to handle various accidents and emergencies
- Hazards to watch out for when babysitting
- Proper first aid for infants, toddlers, or older children
- Stages of child development
- Selecting age appropriate and safe toys, books, and games
- Managing a babysitting business (marketing, finances, operations, etc.)
- Youth language development
- Proper child nutrition at different ages
- Preparing healthy snacks
- Dealing with misbehavior
- Cooking with children
- How to change a diaper or complete another childcare task





LEADER OR PROJECT HELPER RESOURCES

Having a trusted adult that can help guide learning can help youth take their projects to the next level. Thanks for being that helper! The resources below can be used by volunteers to teach a series of babysitting lessons with groups of youth, or can be used as guides to help supplement learning by a single member. A number are aligned with existing curriculum covered in the Babysitting Books section of this guide.

BUILDING BETTER BABYSITTERS FACILITATOR GUIDEBOOK

This guide from Nebraska 4-H provides 5 meetings worth of lessons aligned with the *Building Better Babysitters Teen Workbook*. It is designed to lead youth through the learning in their workbook.

Purchase at <https://marketplace.unl.edu/extension/building-better-babysitters-facilitator-guidebook.html>.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT HELPER'S GUIDE

This guide from Indiana 4-H supports the *4-H Child Development Activity Guides*. It contains tips for working with youth, and then provides additional information on various child development topics, as well as answer keys to activities in the guides.

Purchase from Shop 4-H at <https://shop4-h.org/collections/child-development-curriculum/products/child-development-helpers-guide>.

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE: I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE YOUR TEEN BABYSITTER

This instructor guide, made by 4-H in partnership with the US Army, is designed to help middle school and teenage youth learn what it takes to be a responsible, caring, trustworthy, competent, capable, and safe babysitter. It contains 8 lessons on various topics and is intended to be used along with the youth manual *Do I have what it takes to be your teen babysitter?*

Learn more at <https://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/resources/educator-resources/youth-babysitting>.

BE A GREAT SITTER MINI-UNIT

This resource from educators with the Family Career and Community Leaders of America features lessons about babysitting targeted at middle school aged youth. It features 4 different activities on important babysitting topics.

View the unit at <https://www.familyconsumersciences.com/2020/07/be-a-great-sitter-mini-unit/>.





CREDITS

This resource was compiled by Amy Henschen, Senior Program Lead, Positive Youth Development for Evaluation and Staff Development. It was originally published in June 2024.

SOURCES

Ohio State University Extension. (2014). *Project Idea Starter: Babysitting*. Columbus. https://ohio4h.org/sites/ohio4h/files/d6/files/publications/documents/SelfDetermined/365_17_Babysitting_2015.pdf

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PHOTOS

- *Cover*: girl with camera, photo by Tanaphong Toochinda on Unsplash; kid in coat with toys, photo by zhenzhong liu on Unsplash; hand with toy, photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash
- *Page 2*: kid in swing, photo by Olivia Bauso on Unsplash
- *Page 3*: kids with chalk, photo by Tina Floersch on Unsplash
- *Page 4*: baby with blanket photo, by Jonathan Borba on Unsplash
- *Page 5*: kid with breakfast photo, by Vitaly Gariev on Unsplash
- *Page 6*: kids practicing CPR photo, by Martin Splitt on Unsplash
- *Page 9*: kid with head in hands, photo by Ksenia Makagonova on Unsplash
- *Page 10*: kid blowing bubbles, photo by Trust “Tru” Katsande on Unsplash
- *Page 11*: kid holding various colored crayons, photo by Kristin Brown on Unsplash
- *Page 12*: kid reading a book, photo by Rendy Novantino on Unsplash
- *Page 13*: kid with mask and cape, photo by Jessica Rockowitz on Unsplash
- *Back Cover*: kids in 4-H gear sitting in a row, photo from National 4-H Photo Library





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