

Find out where to access support in your local area
The Scottish Families website www.scottishfamilies.gov.uk
provides free impartial information for families such as:

- Childcare availability in your area including: nurseries, childminders, playgroups and out of school care
- Early learning and childcare places for three and four year olds
- How different types of childcare are organised and what to look for when choosing a service
- Organisations offering support, information and guidance at local and national levels
- Local activities, events and initiatives

How to choose a baby sitter

Childminders should be registered.

All childminders should be registered with the appropriate body in Scotland this is the Scottish Childminder Association www.childminding.org.uk

Check the potential babysitter's age.

Parents should always choose someone over 16 to babysit children. If you use a younger sitter and harm comes to your child, you may be held responsible. And remember that even a 16-year-old may not be mature enough to be left home alone.

Follow your instincts.


If you have any doubts about a childminder, babysitter or other carer, do not leave your children with them. Always ask for at least two references and check these carefully.

Talk to your child.

If your child seems to be unhappy about a particular babysitter, find someone else.

Here are some things you should ask potential babysitters:

- What experience do you have of looking after children?
- Do you have any first-aid skills?
- What do you enjoy most about looking after children?
- What do you think is unacceptable behaviour?
- How would you deal with unacceptable behaviour?
- What would you do in an emergency?



It's actually quite helpful to have grandparents, your partner, friends, or a trusted babysitter taking care of your baby for a short while, in those early months, just so they get used to the idea that other people can also look after them.

Dilemmas for Parents

Problems sleeping

Parents with a young baby with a poor sleep pattern may be tempted to leave their baby sleeping in their cot when popping out to the shops for 15 minutes.

It is never alright to leave a small baby alone in the house, not even for a few minutes. What if the baby wakes up when the parent leaves? For a baby, 15 minutes is a long time to feel abandoned and left alone to cry. The risks are dangerous too what if parents are delayed to go to the shop for 15 minutes (are delayed to go to the shop for 15 minutes)
