



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR BABYSITTER? YOUR CHILD MAY BE IN DANGER

A large number of children in Arkansas are abused by their parent's significant other and some even die. Many parents are unable to find babysitters and they leave their children at home with their significant other while they work. Also, many single mothers have to work and can't afford child care, so they leave a child in the care of a man or woman with limited child care experience and emotional commitment to the child, who then may inflict injury, often out of frustration. DCFS would like for parents to know that they are ultimately responsible for their child's safety and should be very cautious about whom they allow to babysit or care for their children. You must remember that not everyone is good with children. Some people may be good with a 10 year old but not at all good with a 2 year old or an infant.

One study published in the journal Pediatrics found that young children who live in households with adults not related to them are nearly 50 times as likely to die from maltreatment as children living with two biological parents. "The boyfriends are interested in having a relationship with the women," said Dr. Bernard Ewigman, senior author of the November 2005 study and professor of family medicine at the University of Chicago-NorthShore University HealthSystem. "They are neither prepared nor committed to the role of being parents." In many cases, the men do not intend to hurt the child, Ewigman said, but their threshold for tolerating the child's misdeeds is low compared with someone who is committed to the child. "Out of anger and ineffective discipline technique, they end up hurting or killing the child," Ewigman said.

Moms can help to keep their child safe by listening, observing their child's behavior and reactions. Please note: If your significant other is hurting you physically or emotionally, he or she may also hurt your child. Does your child have unexplained bruises or injuries? Does your child act fearful around your babysitter?

Please remember you are responsible for your child's safety.



Your child might be in danger if your significant other

- *Yells, threatens or bully your child*
- *Hits your child*
- *Dislikes your child*
- *Calls your child names and make negative comparisons to others*
- *Belittles, shames and humiliates*
- *Talks negatively to your child*
- *Touches your child in a way that makes you or them feel bad*
- *Has secrets with your child*
- *Hurts you*
- *Abuses alcohol or drugs*
- *Has a history of violence*
- *Gets angry often*
- *Lacks experience in taking care of children*
- *Has unrealistic expectations of your child*
- *Criticizes your parenting*

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To Report Child Abuse Call: 1-800-482-5964
DHS/DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

