

The use of Babysitters for Children in Out of Home Care

Unique identifier: P20/410
Effective from: 3 Sept 20

Carers of children in out of home care are expected to exercise sound judgement when arranging for a baby-sitter for a child in their care. Carers are expected to make the same sound assessments of a baby-sitter's maturity, experience and character integrity as any good parent would do in similar situations.

Carers must take into consideration the age, number and maturity of the children in their care, and the directions stated in their Case and Care Plans.

The carer must consider what information the baby-sitter may need to know about the child. A baby-sitter does not need to know why the child has been placed in care or what the long-term plan for the child is. However, the baby-sitter does need to know about the child's routine behaviours; likes, dislikes or phobias; any medical needs including allergies; and appropriate strategies for supporting positive behaviours.

If the baby-sitting is to be provided in the baby-sitter's home, the out of home care provider must complete a standard home safety check on the baby-sitter's home before baby-sitting episodes occur.

Key points

- The carer has the primary responsibility for selecting the baby-sitter. However, where possible the selection of a suitable person must include a discussion with the child about who the child feels comfortable with.
- The baby-sitter must be able to contact the carer during the babysitting period.
- The baby-sitter must also be aware of how to contact the Child Safety Service if there is an emergency.
- The child's case manager must approve care by a baby-sitter that exceeds ten hours over the period of one week.
- Any costs associated with the use of a baby-sitter to care for a child in care are covered by the standard board payments for the child.

Considerations for good practice

The best interests of the child must be the primary consideration if care by a baby-sitter is being considered. The child's age, length of time in the placement and capacity to be cared for by another person are factors that must be considered.

Procedures

The case and care planning process should include discussions about the child's experiences during periods that a baby-sitter has cared for the child.