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Babysitting for grandparents

Witnessing your children getting older and starting their own lives and families can be bittersweet. There is pride that comes with seeing their successes, but the melancholy of knowing that the years have passed so quickly. Although you may no longer be tucking your children into bed, reading them bedtime stories or bandaging "boo-boos," when your children have children, the chance to nurture can start anew.

One of the great joys that comes from having older children is the ability to welcome and love grandchildren. Grandchildren are points of light in people's lives and provide the exuberance and excitement that reminds you of your own youth. Grandparents often are thrilled to be involved in the care and upbringing of their grandkids. Some may also live with their grandchildren to help take some pressures off of adult children.

Babysitting is one way that grandparents can be a frequent fixture in their grandkids' lives. If it's been some time since you cared for little children, it's well worth it to take a refresher course in child care.

MAKE SURE IT'S SAFE

Conduct a safety audit of your home if grandchildren will be coming over to your place. Are outlets secured with covers? Are medications you may be taking out of reach? Do you have

gates to block stairs or restrict access to certain rooms? Modifications may be needed.

ASSESS YOUR HEALTH

Chasing after children can be a workout. Be sure you are up for the challenge and have the stamina. If you have any medical conditions that can impair judgement or reaction time, you might want to reconsider babysitting.

TAKE DIRECTIONS

The way you parented may not be the same way your own children parent. Be humble and follow their lead with regard to instructions. The parenting guide *Apt Parenting* advises that you should ask about the eating and sleeping habits of the child. You may have to defer to your own children's guidelines on discipline and behavior.

LEARN WHAT'S NEW

Many things regarding childcare have changed in the last 20 years, including safety laws and guidelines. Be sure you are up to date on these changes. And if you aren't certain about something, ask. This involves everything from crib bar widths to car seat installation.

Babysitting can be a joyous task for grandparents who are ready for the job.

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