

SUPER SITTER'S SURPRISE BOX



To overcome any outbursts from the children when the parents are leaving, you may want to have your own Super Sitter's Surprise Box. This can be anything in the way of toys or treasures for them to play with, to stimulate curiosity and to take away fear of being left "forever." The box can be of your own design. It can be as complicated and complex as an overnight case filled with colorful, new, exciting and safe toys you buy (or borrow from a younger sister or brother). It can be as simple as a shoebox filled with toys you have made. It will help ease those first difficult moments and many more besides. Here's how you can make your Super Sitter's Surprise Box:

A variety of colors of "sticky-back" tape and a medium sized box with a lid or an old overnight case are all you need. Cut the tape into strips, squares, triangles and circles and tape them on to the box or case. Besides being attractive and eye-catching, the shapes can be educational. Fill the Surprise Box with any of the "surprises" below:

- large rubber ball
- plastic or wooden animals with smooth edges
- soft plastic or cloth covered books
- plastic or wooden toy cars or trucks with no small detachable parts
- rubber animals
- playing cards
- set of measuring cups
- different colored bandage strips to use as "puppets" on your fingers, or on the baby's fingers.

Try to put a surprise or two -- a book, coloring book, game, puzzle or some item of amusement into your box for an older brother or sister. When making your Surprise Box, remember to use only safe toys! Check to see that they don't have any of the toy dangers listed below. Make your Super Sitter's Surprise Box a safe surprise!

TOYS THEY PLAY WITH



Teach children to play safely by showing them how to use their toys in a safe manner and by teaching them to put their toys away after play. Be particularly aware of safe and unsafe toys. These are some toy dangers you should be aware of:

Small parts - Tiny toys and toys with small removable parts can be swallowed or become lodged in a child's throat, windpipe, ears or nose. The seams of poorly constructed stuffed dolls or animals can break open and release small pellets that can be swallowed or inhaled.

Sharp edges - Toys of brittle plastic or glass can be broken easily, leaving dangerous, sharp, cutting edges. Metal and plastic toys sometimes have sharp edges due to poor construction.

Sharp points - Broken toys can expose dangerous prongs and knifelike sharp points. Pins and staples on dolls' clothes, hair and accessories can easily puncture an unsuspecting child.

Loud noises - Toy caps and some noise-making guns and other toys can produce sounds at noise levels that can damage hearing. Do not allow children to fire cap guns closer than one foot to the ear; also, do not use indoors.

Propelled objects - Projectiles -- guided missiles and similar flying toys -- can be turned into weapons and can injure eyes in particular. Children should never be permitted to play with adult lawn darts or other hobby or sporting equipment that have sharp points. Arrows or darts used by children should have soft cork tips, rubber suction cups or other protective tips intended to prevent injury. Teach children that these toys should never be aimed at people or pets.

Electric toys - Electric toys that are improperly constructed, wired or used can shock or burn. Electric toys with heating elements are only recommended for children over eight years old. Children should be taught to use electric toys cautiously and under adult supervision.

Wrong toy for the wrong age - Toys that may be safe for older children -- like a chemistry or hobby set or games with small pieces -- can be extremely dangerous in the hands of little ones.

Cords and strings - Toys with long strings or cords may be dangerous for infants and very young children. The cords may become wrapped around an infant's neck, causing strangulation. Never hang toys with long strings, cords, loops or ribbons in cribs or playpens. Pacifiers should never be attached to strings or ribbons around a baby's neck.

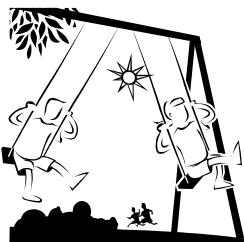
PLAYING OUTDOORS

Some of your daytime sitting may include playing outdoors with the children. Outdoor play equipment -- swings, seesaws and slides -- can be fun, but can be dangerous too. Play safety can be taught to even the youngest toddlers. Children often do the unexpected on playground equipment. They are naturally and normally curious and adventuresome. Standing in a swing is "bigger and better" than sitting in one. Climbing to the top, sitting or swinging on it shows great daring.

Little ones are unaware of risk ... often jumping off or in front of swings, seesaws or gliders. They may walk in front or in back of a moving swing. In an atmosphere of "the more the merrier," they may overload any one piece of equipment and tip the entire structure. Hanging "rings" are particularly dangerous to small children whose heads may be small enough to go through the ring, turning it into a hanging "noose."

All children should be supervised when playing on this kind of equipment. They should be told to sit in the center of a swing. Explain the following hazards: walking in front or in back of a swing; pushing other children off the swing; swinging empty seats; twisting the swing chains; and, climbing up the front of the slide. Roughhousing, overloading equipment and misuse can be curbed from the start if you're there supervising their play.

Older children can be taught certain safety rules and why they are important. Asking them to assist you in supervising the younger ones will help them to understand these rules better. Dangerous roughhousing, stunts, overloading, abuse and misuse of equipment and showing off are unacceptable.



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