

Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD)

Emergency Assistance (EA) Program

Babysitting Guidelines – 2015

1. In order to be approved, babysitters must meet the standards for babysitters established in these guidelines.
2. The family needing babysitting must request approval at least two business days in advance. For families in congregate shelters, permission should be requested from shelter staff. For families in hotels, permission should be requested from DHCD staff. Hotel staff will have contact information and will forward forms to DHCD for families. If you request permission for babysitting at least two days in advance and do not receive a response, your request has been approved.
3. Babysitters shall not provide services for more than six (6) children at a time, including the babysitter's own children (if any). In hotels, babysitters may not babysit for the children of more than one family (in addition to their own) at a time. No more than two children under two years of age shall receive babysitting services at the same time from the same babysitter. No more than two children over the age of two shall receive babysitting services at the same time from a babysitter who is also providing babysitting services for a child or children under two years of age.
4. Babysitters shall be at least 16 years of age, except in the case of older siblings or other household members, who must be at least 14 years of age. An older sibling or household member between the ages of 14 and 16 may only babysit for younger household members in the assigned unit, or while accompanying the younger child to or from transportation to or from the shelter or hotel.
5. Babysitters shall be members of an EA household resident in the same shelter or hotel. Shelter staff may approve other babysitters on a case by case basis for EA households placed in family shelters only. For EA families in scattered site placements, this provision shall mean that a babysitter must participate in a shelter program under the supervision of the same shelter provider as the EA Household receiving babysitting services or be specifically approved by shelter staff.
6. Any babysitting services pursuant to these guidelines shall be provided without pay.
7. Babysitting covered by this Agreement shall take place solely on premises (including scattered site shelter units or hotels) in areas designated by the shelter, which may include the babysitter's room, the room of the EA Household receiving babysitting services, or other space provided by the shelter or common areas designated for babysitting by a shelter. Babysitters who are under age 18 may not take children assigned to their care off of shelter or hotel premises without express approval.
8. No other children may be present in the room where the babysitting services are being performed without adequate adult supervision as determined by shelter or DHCD staff.

9. Babysitters in a shelter shall ensure that no room is locked when babysitting services are being provided in that room.
10. Babysitters shall comply at all times with all applicable EA regulations and shelter rules.
11. Babysitting pursuant to these Guidelines shall be provided only after completion and approval of a Babysitting Agreement containing the terms of the standard form EA Babysitting Agreement, which must be signed by an adult in the children's EA household ("Parent") and the babysitter and then submitted for approval to shelter staff for a shelter placement or DHCD staff for a hotel placement. In addition, the babysitter and parent will complete their sections of the standard form EA Child Information Sheet at the appropriate time shortly before babysitting starts and provide copies to shelter staff for a shelter placement or DHCD staff or hotel staff for a hotel placement before the babysitting assignment (top portion only) and after the babysitting assignment (completed form).
12. Regular/ongoing babysitters may be approved in advance for the convenience of DHCD and the parents using this form. The shelter or hotel must still be notified about each specific incident of babysitting.
13. Self-care by a child 14 years of age or older does not require completion of a Babysitting Agreement or a Childcare Information Sheet, although the babysitting guidelines do apply to the extent relevant.
14. A child between the ages of 14 and 16 taking care of younger household members in the assigned unit or to and from transportation to an off-site location must sign a Babysitting Agreement like any other babysitter.