

## All in the Family

*How child care provided by a relative can work for your family.*



*Why parents often choose a relative to care for their child . . .*

- **Comfort**—because children are generally more at ease with people they know.
- **Love and attention**—if it's a close family member who has genuine affection for your child.
- **Trust**—because you know them well and you know what values you share.
- **Flexibility**—to meet your schedule, especially if it's part-time, evening hours or rotating shifts.
- **Familiar location** in your or a relative's home.

*Making it work smoothly for everyone...*

- Take time to talk regularly, when children are not around.
- Discuss and clarify your ideas about discipline and how you want your relative to set rules and guide your child.
- Make sure your relative has the time, energy, and health to keep up with your child.
- Ask if your relative sees this as a long term or short term arrangement.
- Discuss plans with your relative about television, reading, friends, and chores for your child.

*Remember, SAFETY FIRST!*

- Double check for child safety in your or a relative's home. Use a safety check list.
- Prepare for emergencies with safety plan, a fire extinguisher, medical, and allergy information and a list of work, fire, and emergency phone numbers close by the phone.
- Agree on who may pick up your child.
- Remember, safety for a young child means no hitting or shaking.

*Paying a relative for child care should be in an agreement . . .*

- Be clear about exactly when and how you will pay your family member.
- Write down your agreement so there is no misunderstanding about your arrangements and payments.
- You'll need to agree about holidays, vacations, and sick days for your child or your relative.
- Be creative. In addition to money, what can you do to show your appreciation?

*Families are forever . . .*

*Keeping good relationships . . .*

- Offer to pay for a first aid and CPR class.
- Ask your family member what might be helpful to them in doing child care.
- If you change child care, remember, your relative caregiver is still family!

*There can also be problems . . .*

- Relative care can be lonely for the child and your relative.
- Child care raises unexpected and sensitive issues that can complicate family relationships.

- You and your relative may underestimate how time consuming and tiring it is to provide child care.
- Ideas about discipline may differ.
- Children's needs changes as they grow, and you may need to change child care arrangements.

*When there are problems . . .*

- Find the right time and place to talk about it, when you both are relaxed.
- Express gratitude for all your family does for your child.
- Keep the focus on the child.
- Show respect for your relative's point of view, even when you disagree.
- Think about how to avoid the problem in the future.
- Decide if you are still comfortable with the arrangements or if you will need to start looking for another child care.

*You may need to make a change . . .*

- If your relative finds it too hard to take care of your child every day
- When your child needs a preschool experience with other children
- If your schedule changes
- If it just doesn't work out

*Remember, family is still family . . .*

- Thank your relative for helping.
- Consider asking if your relative could help with back-up care.

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