



*Monday, December 4, 2006*

## **Holiday Babysitting Dos and Don'ts**

**ABC7:**

In this morning's Secretary with Kids, Holiday Babysitting Dos and Don'ts. What's a babysitter responsible for at your holiday party? What's the right amount to give them as holiday gifts. What's the going rate for New Year's Eve?

Here to answer some of our holiday babysitting dilemmas is the founder and C.E.O. of Sittercity.com which is based right here in Chicago. Good morning. Nice to have you here.

**GENEVIEVE THIERS:**

Good morning.

**ABC7:**

Let's started with the holiday party. You all just did a recent survey that found that 72% of parents are having fewer dinner parties now than before kids?

**GENEVIEVE THIERS:**

Not surprisingly. It's a little harder to have a holiday party when you have kids. With the right planning and the right babysitter, you can actually have just as simple a time as you had before planning your party.

**ABC7:**

I certainly can relate to that. It is tough having a party in your house with kids around. Say you are planning a party and you decide to hire a babysitter because you will have some kids around, what's the best way to make sure that things go smoothly.

**GENEVIEVE THIERS:**

The sitter needs to know the number of kids coming to the party but also the ages of the kids coming to the party. I have heard some nightmares where sitters will get to the party and there are 40 kids running around under the age of 2. You have to set that in advance. Setting expectations is also very important. Is the sitter expected to clean up after the party? Is the sitter expected to keep the kids in a separate room? Make sure the sitter

knows that in advance so you don't have any surprises the day of. Finally, help the sitter with scheduling. If the sitter is in a separate room, give them a TV and some games and some books and some food so you can break up the time period and have them move the kids through a certain schedule.

**ABC7:**

Let's talk about tipping and gifting for the holidays. We have this dilemma. Just how much you tip your babysitter, what's the recommendation?

**GENEVIEVE THIERS:**

Well, I see parents go one of two ways. Some of them will go the gift certificate route. That's fine. You can give a gift certificate to the movies. Not surprisingly when we ran a recent survey, the sitters preferred cash. The cash bonus is the most popular.

**ABC7:**

If you're thinking about giving cash, because there is a difference between a casual babysitter versus your nanny or constant babysitter.

**GENEVIEVE THIERS:**

Right. A cash bonus for a nanny, it's a little different. For a sitter, what you would do is double the price of a job. For the nanny, they work more on weekly rate. If they get \$350 a week, double it up to \$700 a week one week at the end of the year. That's a good tipping guide.

**ABC7:**

You also recommend having the kids make something little in addition to the cash gift.

**GENEVIEVE THIERS:**

That's so nice. Something small, something personal. Sometimes the sitter will also bring a gift for the kids.

**ABC7:**

I have to ask you about New Year's Eve. What is the going rate? Do you have to pay a little bit more for New Year's Eve?

**GENEVIEVE THIERS:**

You do. But the good news is it used to be horrible for a sitter. I have heard parents, they used to pay up to \$1,000 a night. Now it's usually between \$20 an hour and \$40 an hour for New Year's Eve.

**ABC7:**

This is the time to book your New year's Eve babysitter, right?

**GENEVIEVE THIERS:**

Right now, everybody waits until the last week. Then you're really in trouble. Start right now.

**ABC7:**

I just have one question in general. Is it a bad idea to ask your neighbors and friends for babysitters because people are very protective of their babysitters.

**GENEVIEVE THIERS:**

There are two things that are very interesting. Sitter stealing and nanny nabbing. Asking to borrow a friend's sitter is like asking to borrow their husband. You can ask for the backup sitter or the sitter source, but don't ask for the person.

**ABC7:**

Thank you very much for coming in this morning. By the way, you can find all this Information Online at [www.abc7chicago.com](http://www.abc7chicago.com). The founder and CEO of Sittercity.com, Genevieve Thiers.