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By Debra Feinstein

## **The Back to School Babysitter Shuffle begins**

It's back to school for lots of kids, and for all you parents, that means one thing -- let the babysitter shuffle begin!

Kimberly Palmer, author of the Alpha Consumer blog at [usnews.com](http://usnews.com) says start online for affordable options.

"One of my favorite websites is actually **sittercity.com** and that connects parents to hundreds of caregivers," Palmer says. "One reason it costs less is because parents themselves do the interviews and do the background checks."

Another tip - team up with other families.

"There is something pretty common in Washington D.C. and that's called 'nanny shares,' where two or more families get together and hire a nanny to take care of both of their kids," Palmer says.

If you work part time, she says you may also want to consider a babysitting co-op, which "works by parents coming together and taking turns taking care of each other's kids."

For those who have the time, babysitting can be a nice pocket padder during a rough economy.

"So many stay at home moms are thinking of ways to boost their own income," she says. "In some cases they're trying to take on additional kids to look after during the day."