

Chicago Tribune

November 3, 2004

By Amy Eagle

Baby-sitting matchmaker

It's a classic dilemma in Parenting Ethics 101: A friend asks if you know any good baby-sitters. Do you help out a pal or keep your list to yourself?

With Sittercity, a database of more than 40,000 sitters in 12 cities, including Chicago, you don't have to risk losing a sitter to keep a friend. Sittercity (www.sittercity.com) is the brainchild of Genevieve Thiers, 26, of Chicago. Thiers, who baby-sat her way through college, recognized parents' and sitters' needs for a matchmaker.

Sittercity works like an online dating service. Parents and sitters post profiles, then look for suitable matches. There are more than 30 search criteria, ranging from ZIP code to smoking status. Although Sittercity does not verify references, the site provides parents with tips for interviewing and checking references themselves. Both parents and sitters can post feedback about one another on the site.

Parents pay \$39.00 to register, plus a \$5 per month membership fee that can be canceled at any time. Sitters register for free.