

What to Charge

Work out your number once, write it down, and say it the same way every time.
Guessing on the doorstep is how sitters end up underpaid.

STEP ONE — YOUR BASE RATE

Start with what sitters your age charge where you live — ask two people. If you cannot ask anyone, start at your local minimum wage plus two dollars. Babysitting is not a minimum-wage job.

BASE RATE, ONE CHILD, PER HOUR

HOW YOU ARRIVED AT IT

STEP TWO — WHAT YOU ADD

ADD FOR	TYPICAL	YOURS
Each additional child	+\$3 to \$5 per hour	
An infant under one	+25% to 50%	
Anything after midnight	+\$2 to \$4 per hour	
Overnight — flat sleep rate	\$40 to \$125 for the block	
A morning shift after an overnight	Your hourly, billed separately	
Holidays — New Year's Eve, Thanksgiving, Christmas	1.5× to 2×	
Booked with under 48 hours' notice	+\$2 to \$5 per hour	
Pets that need real work · housework beyond the kids	Agree it separately, in advance	

STEP THREE — YOUR THREE NUMBERS

ONE CHILD, EVENING

TWO CHILDREN, EVENING

OVERNIGHT, FLAT

Three numbers is all you need. Memorize them. Anything unusual, say "let me work that out and text you tonight" — that is a completely normal thing for a professional to say.

STEP FOUR — HOW YOU SAY IT

"For an evening with the two of them I'm _____ an hour."

"For overnights I do _____ an hour until they're down, then a flat _____ for the night, then hourly again from when the first one wakes."

"So Friday, seven till eight in the morning, that's around _____ total. Does that work for you?"

Two things do the work there. You showed the arithmetic, so the total is not a surprise. And you ended on a question, which hands the pause to them instead of leaving it on you.

BEFORE YOU GO

Rate, start time, end time and the overtime rate — all said out loud before the parents leave. Agree how and when they pay. And write your actual hours down as you go; do not reconstruct them at midnight.