



Choose your partner *carefully*.

Your child's life may depend on it. Never leave your child with someone you don't trust to keep your child safe. Many children are harmed each year by adults who are not trustworthy or who just don't know how to take care of a child. Your baby is counting on you to make the right decision. Contact the Parenting WARMLINE at Family Resources, 1-800-641-4546, for more information and support, or visit the website at www.familyresourcesofpa.org.



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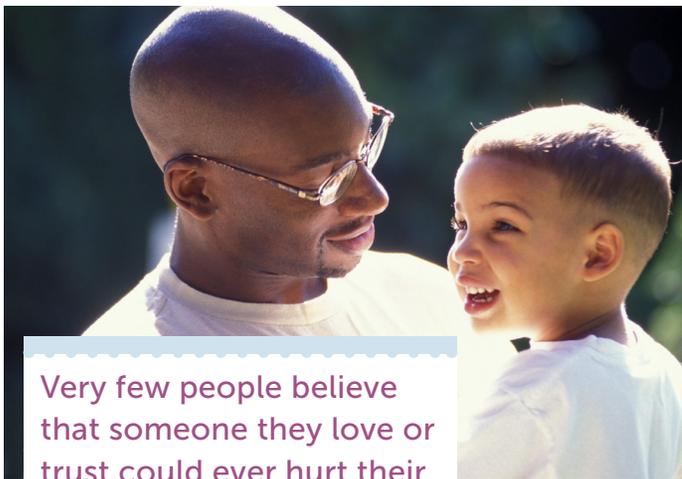
University of Pittsburgh
Graduate School of Public Health



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Very few people believe that someone they love or trust could ever hurt their child. *But it happens.*

Choosing an appropriate caregiver, including a caregiving partner, is one of the most important decisions a parent can make. Just because someone is a lover, relative, or close friend does not mean they are capable of taking care of a child. How well do you know the person who will be caring for your child? Do they make good decisions? Are they responsible and trustworthy? If you wouldn't leave your valuables with this person, don't leave your baby with him or her.

Questions to ask yourself:

- **How does he** treat other women in his life? How does he treat other children (nieces, nephews, friends' children, etc.)?
- **Does she get** angry when you spend time with your child?
- **Does he get** angry or impatient when your child cries or has a tantrum?
- **Does she call** your child bad names or put him down?
- **Does she think** it's funny to scare your child?
- **Does he make** all the decisions for you and your child?

- **Does he put** you down or tell you that you're a bad parent or that you shouldn't have your kids?
- **Does he pretend** when he hurts your child that you are to blame or that it's no big deal?
- **Does he tell** you that your child is a nuisance?
- **Does he scare** your child by using guns, knives, or other weapons?



If you answered “yes” to even one of these questions, your child could be at risk. Never leave your child with someone you don't trust to keep your child safe.

When choosing a caregiver, you should select someone who:

- **Has experience** caring for babies and young children.
- **Is** patient and mature enough to care for an excited or crying baby.
- **Understands that** young children must always be watched.
- **Will never** shake, hit, yell at, make fun of, or withhold food from a child as punishment.
- **Does not** abuse alcohol or drugs or carry a weapon, and will not surround a child with others who may be drinking, using drugs, or carrying weapons.

Before leaving your child in someone's care, ask about the caregiver's experience and how that person would respond to an upset or unwell child. Post an emergency contact list in a visible place, on your refrigerator, for example.

Make sure your caregiver knows what to do when your baby won't stop crying:

- **Check to see if** she or he is hungry, wet, cold or hot, etc.
- **Offer** a pacifier.
- **Walk around holding** the baby close in his or her arms or in a carrier; try talking or singing.
- **Call a** trusted friend, relative, or neighbor who is able to come over and talk to him/her.
- **If all else fails,** put the baby in the crib on her or his back, making sure the child is safe – check in every five minutes or so ... it is much better to let the baby cry than to do something to stop the crying that may be harmful.
- **Never** shake the child — shaking a baby can cause bleeding in the brain, which can injure or kill a child ... it takes only a few seconds of shaking to seriously hurt a baby's brain.

The warning signs of a potentially dangerous caregiver include:

- **Being** angry or very impatient when children have tantrums, cry, or misbehave.
- **Being** violent and/or controlling with his or her partner.
- **Being** physically or verbally abusive toward children.
- **Abusing** alcohol and drugs, including marijuana.
- **Using** prescription medications that have bad side effects or make the person drowsy
- **Being** untrustworthy for any reason.