

Dr. Jim Sears' Babysitting Readiness Quiz: Is your tween ready to be a sitter?

Around younger children, your tween tends to:

- A. Tease the younger kids
- B. Observe the younger kids
- C. Attempt to teach or engage younger kids

If you had to leave your tween alone with a younger sibling for an entire day:

- A. You have to admit, you're scared to think about what might go on.
- B. You think they'd PROBABLY be okay, but are pretty sure there would be some rules broken.
- C. You are almost sure the kids would be absolutely fine.

In situations where young children are present, your tween:

- A. Tends to avoid them most of the time, trying to be alone or with older people
- B. Tends to spend SOME time with them, but loses interest over time
- C. Spends almost every minute with them

If given the choice, your tween would rather:

- A. Play with a video game
- B. Play with a pet or kids his or her own age
- C. Play with younger siblings, family members or friends

Alone in an emergency, your tween would be more likely to:

- A. Panic and become hysterical, upsetting everyone around
- B. Become anxious, but not fall apart
- C. Remember what to do in the moment, even if he or she fell apart later on

When asked to do household chores, your tween:

- A. Is most likely to blow them off
- B. Will put them off, and will only do them after much poking and prodding
- C. Does them eagerly and regularly, rarely having to be reminded

Teachers and friends would most likely describe your tween as:

- A. A handful! Outspoken with a precocious streak
- B. A good kid, but sometimes absentminded
- C. Responsible and reliable

Your tween and younger sibling tend to fight:

- A. Daily - about anything and everything!
- B. Occasionally - about things that matter
- C. Almost never - they get along very well

After a fight with siblings, your tween:

- A. Complains and sulks until you step in
- B. Shows he or she is upset, but can usually let it go in about a day or so
- C. Apologizes and moves on

In school, your tween:

- A. Gets reprimanded by the teacher fairly frequently for breaking the rules
- B. Is typically in line with the exception of talking in class or other minor infractions
- C. Usually follows the rules to a T

SCORING:

A answers = 0 points

B answers = 1 points

C answers = 2 points

What your total means:

0-6 Your tween is probably not yet emotionally mature enough for babysitting. Hold off on caregiving responsibilities until he or she begins to show more interest and exhibits more responsibility at school and at home.

7-14 Your tween may be partially ready, but most likely needs more time to mature and learn. Work on the areas that need improvement and most likely your tween will get there in no time! Reevaluate in six months.

15-20 Congratulations, your tween is ready to spread babysitting wings! Try a practice run for one or two hours at a time to evaluate his or her performance, and continue to reward with longer stretches as abilities are proven. Make sure to get feedback from the children being cared for: Did they enjoy their time? Did everything go OK while the adults were away? If your tween is at this stage, classes in CPR and first aid will enhance his or her qualifications to become a successful babysitter.