

# Groups Childcare Suggestions

One way to gain momentum within a group with children is to have a plan for childcare in place. There isn't a one-size-fits-all type of solution that we advise, but there are a few solutions that may be helpful should your group decide to provide childcare. *Hiring a sitter continues to be the best option for groups and one that we would recommend.* Here are a few things to consider when you set up your childcare:

**How many children/ what are their ages and needs?** We would recommend that an adult sitter not oversee more than 7 children, especially little ones. At that point, we recommend having a second childcare person (this number should be less for a student sitter). Consider the ages of the children and needs. For example: a toddler is going to require much more attention than the 9-year-old who brings their homework.

**How much should I pay?** We recommend parents pay based on the number of children, the age/ability of the sitter, and the difficulties of the childcare environment. *Here's our suggested pay scale:*

- \$8 an hour for a middle school sitter
- \$9 an hour for a high school sitter
- \$10 an hour for an adult sitter (add \$2 per hour once they hit half of their max)
  - For example, pay a college student who watches 6 children for 1.5 hours \$18. That's \$2 per child per hour.

**When do we bring an older child to community group?** Parents should consider this on a case by case basis. But if you plan to bring an older child with you to community group, and you plan for them to be in the children's space, then the sitter should be paid for that. *If an older child is doing homework or playing on a tablet, we'd recommend a place like a kitchen table separated from the childcare space.* If the older child has the ability to help with childcare, other parents should agree to the arrangement.

**Who do we use?** You are welcome to use your own personal sitter or we can make some recommendations for you.

When cost is prohibitive or when you are just looking for a different solution consider trying these creative alternatives. These suggestions are also possible solutions for when childcare falls through:

1. **Have the children join in:** Some groups are content to embrace the possibility of chaos children of all ages present at a group could bring. This works best for babies or very little ones that can play in their midst or within earshot of the parents. Something to consider is that this type of situation can sometimes make it difficult to have deep conversations and take relationships to the next level in the context of the group meeting itself due to possible distractions.
2. **Rotate Caregiving:** A different person or couple from the group could rotate in to be with the children each week. You will want to make sure that everyone feels comfortable with being the childcare provider. This option will not allow the entire group to be together as each week someone will be missing out on the discussion/participation.
3. **Men and Women Split:** One innovative model has been to meet three times in one month with week one the entire family meets; week two the women only meet; week three the men only meet. Fourth week you take off from meeting. This variety of experience can allow families to get to know each other and hang out together while no money is spent. The men and the women get to develop deep and meaningful relationships with one another. One thing to consider is that scheduling can be tricky.

We hope you have found these suggestions helpful! Please know we are here to help in any way we can. Don't hesitate to reach to us via email or give us a call.

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