

**SITTING BUCKS**

Fees charged by a Brisbane babysitting agency

**Booking****\$20** for 1 sitter session**\$90** for 5 sitter sessions**\$170** for 10 sitter sessions**\$300** for 20 sitter sessions**\$22** for same-day booking**\$35** for 24-hour bookings**\$25** Combined family booking fee for 1 session**\$12** Per sitter (for bookings needing more than 1 sitter)**\$25** for public holidays, NYE, etc**Babysitting****\$17** p/h up until midnight (maximum of 3 children)**\$1** extra p/h per child (after the 3rd child)**\$19** p/h after midnight (regardless of child numbers)**\$19** p/h for combined family bookings (maximum of 3 children)**Overnight rates (8pm to 8am)****\$150** flat rate for up to 3 children**\$180** flat rate for 4 children**Overnight rates (24hr booking)****\$285** flat rate for up to 3 children**\$335** flat rate for 4 children

\* Rates higher for Christmas, New Year's Eve, Easter and public holidays

All bookings must be a minimum of 3 hours. Rates valid as of November 1, 2011



# Baby, it's not a bad earner

KRISTIN SHORTEN

DESPERATE parents are shelling out half an average week's wage for a night without the kids as the demand for professional babysitting soars.

Gone are the days of slipping the teenager next door five bucks to do the job, with parents opting for Blue Card-checked and First Aid-certified agency recruits to mind their precious darlings.

Danielle Robertson, the chief executive of national babysitting agency Dial-An-Angel, said "you get what you pay for" with child care.

"I think people are becoming a bit more aware of the obligations from an employer/employee point of view," she said. "By using an agency you pay a little bit more but you get a quality person and know that that person has been screened."

Ms Robertson said a lack of

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**You pay a babysitter \$100, then add on the night you've just paid for... it's too expensive**

Rebecca Morgan

family support often forced parents to contact an agency.

"In the old days, people had neighbours and family all around but that doesn't happen these days. People just don't have the family support they used to," she said.

"They may have to go out because it's a work function or they have a wedding where kids aren't allowed to go... so they think 'What do I do?'"

While agency rates varied –

depending on the children's ages and the shift required – some Queensland companies charged as much as \$335 to mind four kids overnight.

Bardon parents Aly and Brett Mildwaters were forced to use an agency babysitter for their three young sons last year and haven't looked back, and have a regular booking with an agency once a week.

"Prior to that it all seemed too hard," she said. "We didn't know how it would go; we were a bit nervous."

"We relied on family or we would just not go out."

However, Rebecca and Cameron Morgan from Brassall, near Ipswich, said the service was out of reach for many families.

"By the time you pay for a babysitter it's \$100 for (a few hours). Then add on the night you've just paid for, and it's too expensive," Mrs Morgan said. "Families just can't afford it these days."

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