



## When a Brother or Sister Is the Babysitter

**Carol's Club**  CAROL GRAY  
**SOCIAL STORIES**

Custom Social Stories™ Resources Created by Carol Gray for Members - June 18, 2019

### Introduction to the Stories

I thought this project would be completed in record time. There are some Story topics that initially seem easy and turn out to have interesting twists and turns. The request was for help writing a Social Story about when an older sibling is the babysitter. Anne is three and a half and diagnosed with autism. She lives with her grandfather, grandmother, mother, and older sister, Brianna. Anne has always been cared for by family members. She has never had a babysitter who lives somewhere else, like a teenager from down the street. Soon Anne's sister will periodically

be her caregiver. Anne's Mom would like a Story to help Anne understand that there will be occasions when her sister is in charge as the caregiver. What's helpful about this project is the specific topic - a sibling as the babysitter. That led me to believe that we'd be writing one Story. The breakthrough came when we realized that we were going to be writing three.

The first Story, "The People Who Take Care of Me," describes the caregiving arrangements to date and provides a comfortable backdrop for remaining two Stories. There's no new information for Anne in this Story. Anne is cared for by her mom, and occasionally by her grandmother or grandfather. It's a description of what Anne already knows, that which is familiar and comfortable.

The second Story, "When Mom Is Away," continues to build on that which is familiar in greater detail. This Story is about the things that happen when Grandpa or Grandma are in charge, the rules that are followed and general sequence of activities, as well as the food that the grandparents prepare. This Story also includes more information about Brianna (she is older, goes to high school, and has a job) to lay the groundwork for Brianna as a caregiver.

The third Story, "Sometimes Brianna Takes Care of Me," is intentionally similar to "When Mom is Away." It's the same Story, with Brianna substituted for the grandparents. In this way, the Story emphasizes that Anne's experience when Mom is away - the rules, sequence of activities, and available food choices - will be familiar, "business as usual." Brianna is familiar to Anne as her sister, unfamiliar to her as a caregiver. What was interesting in writing this Story is that Brianna's authority over Anne disappears the moment other members of the family return home.

I wouldn't just rely on these Stories to pave the road for a smooth babysitting experience! Some additional ideas:

- Introduce the Stories for the first time with the entire family.
- Explain to Anne how Grandpa, Grandma, and Brianna are able to contact Mom if they need to when they are in charge.
- Talk about favorite foods and activities and create a list of choices when Mom is away
- Develop a schedule that incorporates key vocabulary, phrases, and photos from the Stories. Consider using a few times when Grandpa or Grandma are the caregivers before Brianna uses it to structure the time when she is in charge of Anne.
- Suggest that Brianna and Anne to take photos and write a Story describing their time together to add to the collection of caregiver Stories.

What's fascinating about the babysitter topic is the size - and the wide variety of details that impact how each Story - or set of Stories - is created. A person could easily write one hundred or more babysitter Stories without ever repeating a topic! This is the first time that Carol's Club has addressed babysitters - but I have a feeling there will be subsequent Requests. As always, feel free to contact me for help with babysitting *or any topic*. There's a Request Form in the ClubHouse, or feel free to contact me with any questions or comments at [TakeThisToCarol@gmail.com](mailto:TakeThisToCarol@gmail.com). I'll see you again in a couple of weeks!

