

# Babysitting for sociology

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BUSTER**

Over the past seven years I have come to learn many different things about myself and about children due to babysitting. I first started babysitting when I was a about eleven years of age.

I started off by watching my younger brothers when my parents went out at night. That affected my biological rhythm (274). My body was used to going to sleep around nine o'clock since I was still young, but I had to force myself to stay up so I could watch over my brothers while they slept. I sometimes found myself staying up till about midnight! Since I was so tired from staying up it seemed to have an affect on my sleeping also. It seemed like I would have more dreamsthat I could vividly remember the next morning (280). The next couple of nights after I babysat, it seemed like by body was on REM rebound due to the stages of REM sleep I would miss (276). Now that I am older I have trained my body to be able to stay awake and not feel like I had sleep derivation the next day (280).

During the duration of training my body to stay awake late, I learned a few things the hard way. I first thought that if I drank a lot of caffeine I would be able to stay awake longer and easier. Well that thought nearly ruined me! It wasn't soon after I started relying on caffeine that my body became tolerant to it, and it seemed like I couldn't go sleep without it or wake up without it (297)! At first it seemed like I was going through a withdrawal period (297). My body was craving the caffeine so badly that I felt sick without it. From that experience I have learned that doing homework or talking on the phone helps me stay awake while I am waiting on the children's parents to get home. I am lucky that I have only suffered from addiction to caffeine and not

drugs. A friend of mine became addicted to cocaine due to having to stay awake late for school.

When she took that drug she said it made her feel like she could stay awake forever. To stay awake that is what a person wants to feel. Cocaine addiction is a fast track from euphoria to crash (301). Through my many years of experience in babysitting I have learned that most children fall under the category of associative learning. Associative learning is learning that certain events occur together (315). For example with most children after everything they do there is some sort of consequence. Younger kids have a tendency to get into things that they shouldn't.

Therefore, after they get into something that is off limits, they get in trouble. After watching kids fall under that category I also realized that many adults fall under it also. It seems like after every action there is a consequence. Here are some examples of kids actions and the responses they get. When a kid eats or drinks, automatically they have to use pee or poop afterwards. That is an example of unconditioned response (317). The substance the kid puts in their mouth is the unconditioned stimulus (317).

A kid has to use the restroom soon after they eat because they haven't quite learned how to control their urges. That is why they sometimes also go the bathroom in their pants. I learned a lot about babysitting through observational learning. Observational learning is observing and imitating others (341). When I was younger and I was unable to baby sit, a closefamilyfriend used to come over and watch my brothers and I. I learned

a lot of from her. I learned many games from her that I now play with the kids I baby-sit.

That comes in handy when I try to keep all of the kids occupied. Another thing that I learned from her that comes in handy when babysitting is patience. Patience plays a very big role. Kids repeat things over and over again, in other words they don't know when to quit. That turns into getting on my nerves a lot. I have learned not to let it bother me as much. I have taught myself to take a deep breath when that happens and try to get the kids minds on something else.

There are two different kinds of reinforcement I use with the kids while I baby-sit. They are positive and negative reinforcement (329). I use positive reinforcement when the kids do something that is good. For example, if they clean off their plates after they eat and get everything ready for bed, I will give them a good night treat. If the kids do something bad or if they go against what I tell them to do, I use negative reinforcement. Negative reinforcement may be they do not get a good night treat, they have to go to bed a half an hour early, or I may even give a bad report to their parents. I only give a bad report to the parents if they didn't listen to me at all, or if they continued to back talk me.

I find a lot that latent learning occurs a lot with the kids also (334). While I am baby-sitting I try to teach the kids something new every time. Sometimes they pick it right up other times it takes a while. For example, I try to teach the kids to always wash their hands before and after they eat. I teach them by making a point to let them know what I am doing when I wash my hands.

Soon after, I will catch one of the kids trying to reach the facet to turn it on so they can wash their hands. When it comes to the kids memory, its not very long.

It seems like to me that kids only remember things if they really want it. Other than that, they have short term memory. Short term memory is when you learn something but shortly afterwards you forget what it is (362). For example, when I am helping the kids clean up their room I try to tell them where stuff goes so that they can do it on their own. Well every time it comes to clean up time, they don't remember where anything goes. When ever the kids do remember what I have said or taught them, they are retrieving memories from storage. Storage is the heart of memory (361).

Through all of my years of baby-sitting and experiences, I have learned many things about myself and about the kids I watch. I am now able to predict what certain kids are going to do or say at a certain time. I have gotten to know each of their personalities and became familiar with they things they like and the things they don't like. I am also familiar with the things they know and what things they do not know. Through everything the kids put me through and taught me, I have learned a very important thing about myself. I love working with kids and that is what I hope to do in life regardless of what field it is in.