



## **When can I leave my child alone?**

The Child and Family Services Act does not identify an age when a child can be left alone, or an age at which a child can supervise or babysit other children. The Act recognizes that age alone is not a sufficient safeguard for the supervision of children.

## **How do you know if your child is ready to be left alone?**

The Act says that a person who has charge of a child less than 16 years of age cannot leave the child without making provision for his/her care or supervision that is reasonable under the circumstances. Provision for the child's care can include several things. For example, has the child taken a Home Alone course for children aged 10 years and older? Is a parent or trusted adult easily available to the child should the need arise.

Other considerations should include:

- \*The child's developmental level
- \*The child's level of competence
- \*The child's ability to communicate
- \*The time of day the child will be left alone
- \*How long the child will be alone
- \*Is the home and neighbourhood safe?
- \*Does the child know what to do in an emergency?

Under the Criminal Code, everyone who unlawfully abandons or exposes a child who is under the age of 10 years, so that its life is or is likely to be endangered, or its health is or is likely to be permanently injured is guilty of an offence that carries a penalty of imprisonment of not more than five years.

If you are unsure as to whether you should leave your child home alone, please consult with our Telephone Intake unit. You do not have to identify yourself.