

This Pamphlet

Helps parents and other caregivers with some general guidelines to think about when making decisions for the kind of supervision their children need to keep them safe.

Section 136 (3) and (4) of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* outline laws for the supervision of children. For a copy, please contact us.

It is the parents or caregivers responsibility to be sure that the plan for their child(ren) meets their need for safety and supervision. This pamphlet can help you make a plan for your child's supervision.

More Safety Tips

- Never leave a child alone in a car.
- Carefully supervise a child with pets. (pets can be unpredictable).
- Directly supervise young children alone near water (bathtub, pool, hot tub, river etc.)
- Store lighters, matches, medication, cleaning products or other hazards out of the reach of children.

Choosing a Babysitter

- You can find babysitters by talking with friends, relatives, neighbours, co-workers, faith/spiritual groups, school or neighbourhood centres.
- Make sure that you know the babysitter. You should know their first and last name, address and phone number. You should make sure your children know the babysitter too and that they are comfortable with them.
- Ask for references. You could speak to other parents or caregivers who have used this babysitter; ask if they can provide a criminal reference check or a record check from the Children's Aid Society.
- Interview the babysitter. Ask them if they have any experience or training, like a babysitting course certificate or training in First Aid and CPR. Ask what activities they will do with your children. Ask them about discipline and tell them how you would like them to discipline the children.
- Tell the sitter if your child has any allergies or takes medication.
- The sitter should know what to do if your child becomes sick.
- The sitter should know how to reach you in case of an emergency.
- The sitter should know when you will come home.



Huron-Perth
Children's Aid Society

Stratford Office
639 Lorne Avenue East |
Stratford, ON | N5A 6S4
Tel. 1-800-668-5094
Fax 519-272-0953

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413 MacEwan Street |
Goderich, ON | N7A 4M1
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SAFE CHILDREN.
CONFIDENT YOUTH.
RESILIENT ADULTS.

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Guidelines for Supervision
of Children

Huron-Perth Children's Aid Society



Children 0 to 4 Years Old

Children in this age group can **never** be left alone.

- Parents and caregivers must be able to directly supervise their child in this age group at all times.

Children 5 to 7 Years Old

Children in this age group cannot be left alone.

- These children can play out of their parent's direct supervision for up to 30 minutes when their parent or caregiver is home and can check on them regularly. For example, children can play outside in a fenced yard while their parent or caregiver is in the home and check on them directly.
- Children this age can be taught to walk to school or wait for a bus by themselves but it is preferred that children this age be with a parent or caregiver.

Children 8 to 9 Years Old

Children in this age group should not be left home alone.

- A parent or caregiver must supervise children this age before and after school.

When a parent or caregiver is home, children this age can play in the neighbourhood for up to one hour if:

- The parent or caregiver has thought about the child's developmental ability;
- The child is responsible and can be counted on to follow rules;
- The child knows general rules for safety. For example, the child will not leave the area with someone or go to a different area without their parents' or caregivers' permission;
- The parent or caregiver knows the area that the child will play in and that it is safe. For example, the area is not near a busy road or water and there is nothing that the child could hurt themselves with;
- The child knows what to do in case of an emergency, like a fire.

Children 10 to 11 Years Old

Children in this age group can sometimes be left alone for up to 1–2 hours (for example, after school) if they are not afraid to be home alone and they are mature enough for this. However, this age group should not be home alone during overnight hours or be expected to take care of younger siblings.

If a parent or caregiver decides to leave a child in this age group home alone, they should talk to their child first. Things to discuss with your child include:

- Where they can play;
- Set limits on having friends at the home;
- Who to contact if there is a problem or if they become frightened or uncomfortable;
- Where they can find a list of emergency phone numbers;
- Whether to answer the telephone or the door and if they do this, what they should say so that the person does not know they are home alone;
- What to do in case of an emergency. For example, in case of a fire, children should be taught to leave the home and call 911 from a neighbour's home.

If the decision has been made, parents or caregivers are encouraged to give their children a chance to practice being left alone for short periods of time, such as 15-20 minutes so that the child can develop comfort with the plan and increase their confidence.

Children 12 to 13 Years Old

It is recommended that children in this age group are not left alone overnight.

Children in this age group can sometimes babysit younger children. A babysitter who has a babysitting certificate has learned skills that help to keep children safe and has shown a commitment to take care of younger children. The babysitter should be able to follow safety rules.

A 12 or 13 year old babysitter:

- Must be able to contact a parent, caregiver or a responsible adult in 0-5 minutes for any questions or help that is needed;
- Should not babysit more than 2 children;
- Should not be responsible for cooking, bathing or supervising swimming;
- Should not babysit for more than 4 hours per day;
- Should not babysit after midnight.

To advocate for and protect children's rights; to support and strengthen families; and to be leaders for positive change in our community.

