

# Who can babysit tonight?

*The Child and Family Services Act* states that "no person having charge of a child less than 16 years of age shall leave the child without making provision for his or her supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances".

A parent/adult having charge of a child must make reasonable provision for the child's supervision and care, ensuring that the child is safe and well cared for.

Neither the legislation nor the Ministry of Child and Youth Services provides CASs with any clear direction as to the age at which a child may be left unattended or be able to babysit other children.

## **What criteria should I use in choosing a babysitter?**

The Children's Aid Society recommends that children not babysit until they are age 12 or preferably older.

Children and youth who babysit should attend a recognized babysitting course.

Babysitting courses are offered by

- St. John's Ambulance
- Red Cross Society

**Make sure that the babysitter has information about how to get hold of you in an emergency, along with other emergency numbers...**

Parents and adults should consider the following when making a decision regarding a babysitter

- age and developmental levels of the babysitter and the child
- babysitter's level of confidence, knowledge of child care and behaviour towards children
- accessibility of parent/adult in charge/friends and neighbours in case assistance is needed
- ability to obtain assistance by the babysitter
- expectations and amount of responsibility of the babysitter
- number of children that will be with the babysitter
- time of day and length of time children will be with the babysitter

**Parents should ensure that the supervision and care is sufficient for their children in their absence**

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