

Who can Baby-Sit 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 Children and Youth Services* provide Children Aid Society’s 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 Windsor-Essex Children’s Aid Society recommends that children not babysit until they are 12 years old or preferably older. Children and youth who babysit should attend a recognized babysitting course. Below is a list of organizations that offer babysitting courses in Windsor and its surrounding communities.

Canadian Red Cross	519-944-8144
South Essex Adult Learning Centre	519-325-0886
University of Windsor	519-253-3000 ext 4969
YMCA*	519-258-9622
Youth and Family Resource Network*	519-733-8983; 1-877-733-8983

*** Also offer Home Alone Programs**

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 and neighbours in case assistance is needed
- Babysitter’s ability to obtain assistance
- 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 babysitter

Babysitter Information Sheet

Police _____

Fire _____

Poison Control _____

Hospital _____

House Address _____

Home Phone Number _____

Work Phone Number _____

Emergency Contact Person #1 _____

Emergency Contact Person #2 _____

Doctor's Phone Number _____

Doctor's Address _____

Child #1

Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Medical Conditions _____

Medication and Dosage _____

Child #2

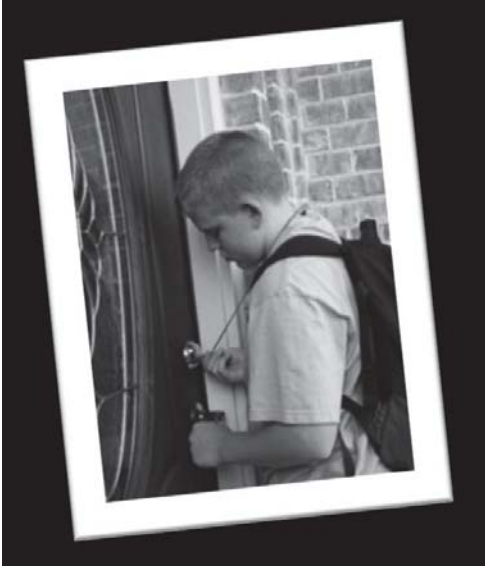
Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Medical Conditions _____

Medication and Dosage _____

When can my Child Stay Home Alone?



Children aged 10 to 11 years old may be occasionally left alone at home for up to 1 - 2 hours provided they have no fear or anxiety staying home alone and the child's level of maturity matches this arrangement. Children in this age group should not be home alone for any period of time during overnight hours or be expected to take care of younger siblings or friends. To ensure a child's safety, parents should teach them general safety rules (Ontario Early Years Centre). Below are some strategies that you can use to help keep your children safe when they are home alone.

- Put a first-aid kit in a handy location such as the kitchen
- The kitchen also is a good place to keep a flashlight, batteries, and battery-powered radio in case there is a power outage due to a storm
- Make sure your child knows how to call 911
- Post your work numbers and those of neighbours that could be called for help
- Write your home address and phone number in a visible location
- Leave a spare key with a neighbour in case your child loses theirs
- Go over what your child should do in case of a fire. Have a fire drill and practice different escape routes.
- A session on kitchen safety is a must for kids who will be making their own snacks and who might eventually progress to starting dinner before you get home.
- While in the house, your child should keep the doors and windows locked.
- If a stranger calls, instruct your children to reply "My parents can't come to the phone right now" (FamilyEducation.com, 2000)