



Family Law

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YOUR EX DOES!

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The answer to this question is, it depends- several variables including the child's maturity, whether there are any other older siblings, and whether you are leaving the child alone in your home or in your vehicle, play a role.

The key variable is the age of your child. If your child is from birth to four years of age, your child must be supervised at all times. Children 5 to 11 years of age may play unsupervised when a parent is at home and can check in regularly with the child or is able to see the child. Generally, children aged 10 to 11 should not be left alone before or after school. Even at the age of 12 to 16 the Children's Aid Society (CAS) does not recommend that a child be left alone overnight.

You need to be aware that in Canada, the Criminal Code states that anyone who leaves

a child under the age of 10 in a severely dangerous or life-threatening circumstance can face up to five years in jail.

In Ontario, the Child and Family Services Act is enforced by the CAS. This Act covers children aged 18 and under and clarifies what would prompt a CAS investigation. If an investigation determines that a parent has failed to care for, protect and supervise a child and as a result the child has come to physical harm, or the investigation finds a pattern of neglect in caring for a child, the CAS can take many steps, including removing the child from their parents.

The bottom line is to use your common sense. If your gut is telling you not to leave your child alone, don't. A few hours of inconvenience can save a lifetime of regret.

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When can I leave my child alone?

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