

## HOW OLD IS OLD ENOUGH?

As a parent you often wonder at what age your child can be left unsupervised or can baby-sit other children. The following are some guidelines to consider for leaving your child unattended or allowing them to baby-sit other children.

- The maturity level of your child
- The availability of parent, guardian, or caretaker by phone or in person
- The health status of your child
- Your child's awareness of the dangers of appliance use (stove, iron) or unusual hazards in the home
- Discussion of an escape plan or fire drill participation with your child
- Discuss the locations of your smoke detectors with your child.
- (Remember to check your batteries two times a year!)
- What is your child's reaction to being left alone?
- Consider enrolling your child in a baby-sitting clinic. Check your community education booklet or call your child's school

## AGE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

- Children 7 years of age and younger should not be left alone for any period of time!
- Children 8 to 10 years of age should not be left alone for more than three hours.
- Children 11 to 13 years of age should not be left alone for more than 12 hours and not overnight.
- Children 14 to 15 should not be left alone for more than 24 hours.
- Children 16 to 17 may be left alone for over 24 hours with a plan in place concerning how to respond to an emergency.

## SUPERVISION OF OLDER CHILDREN -GUIDELINES-

A child age 11 to 15 years of age may baby-sit with the expectation that the parent, guardian, or caretaker will be returning to supervise the children later that same day, with 12 hours.

An adolescent 16 to 17 years of age providing baby-sitting for young children for more than 24 hours, must know the whereabouts of the parents, when they will return, and have adult back up supervision.