



Drug-endangered Children Act

INFORMATION SHEET

What is the *Drug-endangered Children Act*?

The *Drug-endangered Children Act* is the first legislation in Canada to protect children exposed to an adult's involvement in serious drug activity, such as manufacturing and trafficking. This law makes it clear that these kids are victims of abuse and need our protection.

How does it work?

Under this legislation, caseworkers and police officers can apprehend a child in danger from an adult's drug activity. If within two days the child cannot be safely returned to a parent or guardian, the child will begin receiving services under Alberta's child welfare legislation, the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

Who is a drug-endangered child?

Any child who was, or is likely, to be harmed due to an adult's drug activity is considered drug-endangered. This may include being in a place where crystal meth is being made or marijuana is being grown, or being present when drugs are being sold.

Why do we need this legislation?

Drug activity is increasing throughout our province and innocent children are being found in places where drugs are being produced or sold, like methamphetamine labs and indoor marijuana grow operations.

This legislation will ensure child welfare caseworkers and police officers are able to take immediate action to protect drug-endangered children. It will help ensure we are able to respond to this emerging social issue.

Why are these kids in danger?

Children exposed to such a damaging physical and social environment face a variety of health and safety risks, including:

- inhalation, absorption, or ingestion of toxic chemicals and substances;
- fires and explosions;
- abuse and neglect; and
- medical problems.

These kids can suffer from:

- poor nutrition;
- lack of medical and dental care;
- poisoning;
- internal and external burns;
- seizures;
- stress and anxiety;
- physical and sexual abuse;
- internal organ damage;
- chronic respiratory problems;
- neurological damage; and
- cancer.

DID YOU KNOW?

Under Alberta law, you **must** report suspected child abuse.

If you have reason to believe a child is being abused or neglected, call the confidential
Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-387-5437.

This information sheet is available online at www.child.gov.ab.ca/DECA.

Alberta
Children's Services