

CHILD
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
SEEMS PRETTY UNREAL

IF ONLY THAT WERE TRUE

Learn the facts about sexual exploitation.

Alberta

The *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* recognizes that children involved in prostitution are victims of sexual abuse who need help and protection.

Children involved in prostitution are victims of sexual abuse.

OVERVIEW

Under the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act*, a sexually exploited child can receive a variety of voluntary community services to assist them in ending their involvement in prostitution. Sixteen and 17-year-old youth, who may not be living at home or have guardian support, can access all available services without parental or guardian permission. Youth who have an agreement under the Act at age 18 can continue to receive services up to age 22.

Under the Act, a child apprehended due to their involvement in prostitution can be placed in a protective safe house for up to five days. During this placement, the child is assessed for child protection needs, medical concerns, drug and alcohol use, family support and their level of risk related to their involvement in prostitution.

If the assessment determines that the child continues to need protection, a caseworker can apply to Family Court for up to two additional 21-day periods of confinement.

During the placement period, the child will be offered a variety of services including drug and alcohol counselling, medical supports, counselling or psychological services, educational programming and life skills support. These services are tailored to meet the individual needs of each child in a holistic manner.

The additional time spent in the protective safe house allows staff to work with the child and help them to break the cycle of abuse and begin the recovery in a safe and secure environment.

Over 75 per cent of people working in the sex trade in Canada began working as a child.

"Strolling Away", Susan McIntyre, PhD

RIGHTS PROTECTION

As soon as a child involved in prostitution is placed in a protective safe house, the child is informed in writing about:

- Why he or she was removed from the risk situation
- The duration of the placement
- Court dates
- Their right to legal representation

The child is also given an opportunity to contact a lawyer and told he or she may request a court review of the confinement.

THE ACT

The *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* recognizes that children involved in prostitution are victims of sexual abuse who need help and protection.

The *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* provides for a variety of voluntary community services to assist children and youth in ending their involvement in prostitution.

This legislation also allows police and caseworkers to apprehend sexually exploited children, with or without a court order, to ensure their safety and well-being. The legislation is based on the following principles:

- Children involved in prostitution are victims of child sexual abuse.
- Children have a right to physical and emotional safety, security and well-being.
- Children have a right to be safe from sexual abuse and protected from sexual exploitation.
- Children involved in prostitution, their families and caregivers do not require child intervention status to receive services.

Under the Act, those who exploit children can be charged with child sexual abuse and fined up to \$25,000, jailed for up to two years, or both.

FACTS

- Child prostitution is ***sexual abuse***.
- The average age of a child involved in prostitution in Alberta is ***15.4 years old***.
- Most people don't realize that many of those being victimized by prostitution are children and youth under the age of 18. ***Some are even as young as 11.***
- 11 per cent of the youth served in ***2006-2007 were male***. Many males who become involved are struggling with sexual identity or orientation.
- Prostitution can happen anywhere, ***to anyone's child***, regardless of social, cultural or economic background.

TAKE ACTION

Programs and services are available across Alberta to help children end their involvement in prostitution. In addition, prevention and public awareness activities are carried out to reduce the incidences of children and youth being sexually exploited.

**Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-387-KIDS (5437)
www.child.alberta.ca**

To learn more about the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* visit the Children's Services' website at **www.child.alberta.ca**.

If you know of a child or youth who is being sexually exploited, call the Child Abuse Hotline at **1-800-387-KIDS (5437)** or your local police department.

LEARN MORE.