

## SUMMARY OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE: NOVA SCOTIA

There are laws in Nova Scotia under the *Children and Family Services Act* about what must happen when a person suspects that a child may have been abused or is at risk for abuse. Below is a summary of these laws. ***You are responsible for reporting suspicions of child abuse, not for proving whether or not child abuse has occurred. It is the responsibility of a child protection agency to investigate, with police where necessary, and decide on the best plan for the child.***

### DUTY TO REPORT

**Every person in Nova Scotia, including someone who works with children**, who suspects that a child may have been abused or is at risk for abuse must immediately report the information to a child protection agency.

### HOW OLD IS A CHILD IN NOVA SCOTIA?

In Nova Scotia, a person is a child from birth until his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY

If a person reports suspected child abuse, s/he cannot be sued if it is proven that the report was made in good faith, and not to cause trouble for anyone.

### FAILURE TO REPORT

If a person fails to report to a child protection agency, s/he can be charged and fined up to \$2,000 or imprisoned for up to 6 months, or both.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

There are some relationships that are considered confidential, for example between a doctor and patient, or between clergy and members of the congregation. However, a confidence cannot be kept if child abuse is suspected. No matter what the relationship between people, one must always follow through on the duty to report suspicions of child abuse.