

GUIDELINES FOR Leaving Kids HOME ALONE

AGE APPROPRIATE:

7 & Under	Should not be left alone for any period of time
8-10 years old	Should not be left alone for more than 1 1/2 hours & only during daylight and early evening hours.
11-12 years old	May be left alone for up to 3 hours but not late at night.
13-15 years old	May be left unsupervised but not overnight.
16-17 years old	May be left unsupervised (in some cases, for up to two consecutive overnight periods)

SAFETY TIPS:

- Things to memorize: Full name, address, telephone number.
- Post an emergency list - local, long distance numbers to call in case of emergency.
- Let neighbors know that your child may be home alone.
- Call the child several times while you are away.
- Teach your child how to lock windows and doors.
- Tell your child not to go into other people's homes (neighbors included) without your permission.
- Designate a safe house to run to if the child feels like he/she is in danger.
- Teach children kitchen safety and what is/is not okay when you are not at home with them.

BY STATE

Age & Maturity

There is no agreed-upon age when a child can stay home alone safely. Because children mature at different rates, you should not base your decision on age alone.

You may want to evaluate your child's maturity and how he or she has demonstrated responsible behavior in the past.

- The following questions may help: Is your child physically and mentally able to care for him- or herself?
- Does your child obey rules and make good decisions?
- How does your child respond to unfamiliar or stressful situations?
- Does your child feel comfortable or fearful about being home alone?

Safety Skills

In addition to age and maturity, your child will need to master some specific skills before being able to stay home alone safely. In particular, your child needs to know what to do and whom to contact in an emergency situation. This information should be written out in a way the child can understand and stored in an easily accessible place. Knowledge of basic first aid, such as how to check for breathing, assist with choking, and treat burns, also is useful.