

Who is at your house right now? Are you sure?

Home Alone

As parents it is up to us to educate and prepare our children to assume the responsibilities of being “home alone.” Each child is ready to assume this responsibility at different times based on his/her maturity level. It is important to set house rules, establish routines and educate your children about emergency procedures before they are left alone. Lastly, monitoring is very important during this time. Check in to make sure that house rules are being followed and acknowledge your children when they make good choices during this time.

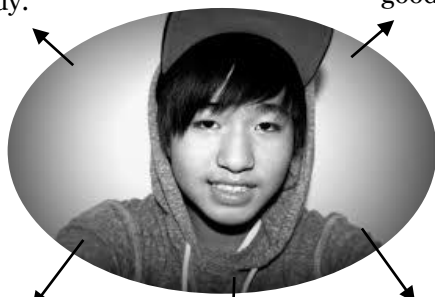


Here are some things to consider as you are determining whether or not your child is ready to be left alone.....

Their feelings.

Are they nervous about being alone? If so, they may not be ready.

Maturity. Can they think things through, plan ahead and make good decisions?



Environment.

Is the neighborhood safe? Are there people nearby that can be trusted to help watch out for your child?

Time. How long will they be left alone? They might be fine for an hour or two, but a whole day may be too long.

Age. Experts believe that 12 is the youngest that a child should be left alone and 15 before they can care for siblings.

Set Boundaries.

HOUSE RULES:

- Don't allow other children over to your home when you are not home
- Establish a protocol on how to answer the phone and door when you are not there
- Establish limits on television, phone and TV time

SET A ROUTINE:

- Lock all doors behind you
- Call a parent or designated person at a certain time to “check-in”
- Help with household chores (i.e. pet care, dishes, etc.)

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

- Post emergency numbers and contacts including family members and family doctor's name and number
- Keep a basic first aid kit for emergencies
- Go over emergency escape routes, meeting places and plans for sudden illness or injury

