

STAYING HOME ALONE



With everything parents have to juggle these days, the time may come when families have to leave a child home alone. There are a number of important things to consider before allowing your child to stay home without you.

You should...

- Assess your child. Make sure he or she is mature enough to handle this responsibility. Ask your child how he or she feels about being alone.
- Define rules and expectations to help ensure your child maintains a daily routine while home alone.
- Keep a list of numbers close to the telephone including those for you, other trusted adults, 911 and other emergency services.
- Create practice situations and be sure your child understands what to do in specific emergencies such as a fire or loss of electricity.

Make sure your child knows...

- His or her full name, address and telephone number along with your full name and how to reach you.
- He or she should never open the door for someone unless that person is on a preapproved list of trusted adults you have provided.

Also make sure your child knows how to...

- Contact 911 in case of an emergency.
- Carry his or her key so it is hidden and secure.
- Lock the door after entering and make sure the home is secure.
- Tell callers you're unavailable instead of saying he or she is home alone.
- Check with you immediately upon returning home to let you know he or she has safely arrived.