

## TEACH YOUR CHILDREN

- To memorize their name & address – including city and state.
- To memorize their phone number, including area code.
- How and when to use 911. Make sure your child has a trusted adult they can call when they are scared or have an emergency.
- To check in with you or a neighbor immediately after arriving home.
- To never go into your home if a door is open or a window is broken, and to know another safe place to go immediately.
- How to work your home's door and window locks and to lock them when they are home alone.
- Show your child 2 escape routes in case of fire. Practice them. Tell children where to go (mailbox, neighbor)
- How to know when to answer the telephone and the door.
- Not to go into anyone else's home without your permission.
- Never to go anywhere with another adult, even one who says you have sent him or her. Adopt a family code word to be used if you have to ask a third party to pick up your children.
- To avoid walking or playing alone outside.
- That a stranger is someone neither you nor they know well.
- That if they feel they're being followed, either on foot or by a car, to run to the nearest public place, neighbor, or safe house.
- To tell you if anyone asks them to keep a secret, offers them gifts or money, or asks to take their picture.
- To always tell you if something happened while home alone that made them feel uncomfortable in any way.
- **Your** rules about inviting friends over and using the computer when you are not home.
- Which kitchen appliances they may use and how to do so safely.

## USE OF THE TELEPHONE

The telephone is your child's link to others while you are away; using it will make you both feel a lot better. Let your child know if your rule is to let the answering machine take all calls.

Practice answering the phone, if your child is allowed to do so. Let your child find out who is calling, and explain to the caller that you are busy at the moment. Instruct your child not to say they are home alone, and to let you know who has been calling. Explain when and how to use 911. Be sure they know how to make emergency calls and how to reach the operator.

### HOME ALONE PHONE LIST:

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Work #: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Work #: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

POLICE: 911 or \_\_\_\_\_

FIRE: 911 or \_\_\_\_\_

AMBULANCE: 911 or \_\_\_\_\_

DOCTOR: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Other people I can call: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **A Parents Guide . . . to Assessing a Child's Readiness for Self Care**



**Many parents ask:  
“At what age can you legally leave  
a child home alone?”**

The law in New York does not provide a set age or guideline when children can be left alone or for how long.

Each child is different. A caretaker must consider children individually in terms of their physical, social, emotional and mental capabilities. This is a big decision and it takes a lot of thought and preparation.

First, see how comfortable your child feels about the possibility of being home alone. Answer all their questions and help them understand what the rules and boundaries are. Assessing your child's readiness for self-care is an opportunity for parents to discuss all aspects of safety and crime prevention. It can also build a child's self-esteem, confidence and competence. A close relationship between caretaker or parent and child can decrease possible negative effects of self-care.

If you decide your child is ready for self-care, it is important to start for short periods of time, no more than 30-45 minutes. After each experience, discuss with your child how it went and how they felt about the experience. This guide is a tool when you are discussing self-care with your child.

**PARENT'S CHECKLIST**

**Circle One:**

- Yes No Can your child give their address and directions to your home?
- Yes No Can your child say & dial your home phone number?
- Yes No Does your child know basic first aid and where first aid supplies are kept in the home?
- Yes No Can your child handle telephone calls correctly when they are home alone?
- Yes No Can your child show you how they would handle someone at the door when home alone?
- Yes No Does your child know how to reach you or other responsible adults by phone?
- Yes No Does your child know how to contact responsible adults in case of emergency?
- Yes No Can your child locate a safe place to seek shelter during a storm?
- Yes No Can your child name five household safety rules for your home?
- Yes No Has your child shown an interest or would feel safe if home alone?
- Yes No If other siblings will be present, are the children willing to stay alone together and keep from fighting with each other?
- Yes No Will your child tell you if something happened while they were at home alone that made them feel uncomfortable in any way?

**CHILD'S CHECKLIST**

**Circle One:**

- Yes No Can you give your address and directions to your home?
- Yes No Do you know basic first aid and where first aid supplies are kept in your home?
- Yes No Can you explain two escape routes from your home in case of fire?
- Yes No Do you know how to handle telephone calls correctly when you are home alone?
- Yes No Do you know what to do if someone comes to the door when you are home alone?
- Yes No Do you know how to reach your parents or other trusted adults by phone?
- Yes No Can you name and do you know how to contact two adults by phone?
- Yes No Do you know how to be safe during a storm?
- Yes No Can you name 5 household safety rules?
- Yes No Do you feel safe when you are home alone?
- Yes No Are you glad for the chance to stay home alone?
- Yes No If other brothers & sisters will be home with you, are you willing to stay home alone together and help each other get along?
- Yes No Will you tell your parents if something happens while you are alone that makes you feel uncomfortable in any way?

**IMPORTANT**

- This checklist is provided as a tool to help you decide whether your child is too young to be left home alone.
- You and your child should complete the checklists separately. If there are differences in your answers, discuss them with your child.
- Use this checklist as one factor in making your decision. It should be used as a guide only, not as the deciding factor.
- **PARENTS SHOULD CONSIDER THE WISDOM OF LEAVING ANY CHILD, ESPECIALLY A CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 10, HOME ALONE FOR ANY PERIOD OF TIME.**

This Home Alone Guide was prepared by the Coalition of Parent Educators of Broome County, (COPE) who gratefully acknowledges the assistance and resources of the NYS Prevention Information Resource Center, the Div. of Criminal Justice Services, and School Age Connections.

For more information call:

**First Call for Help:**  
 1-800-901-2180 or dial 211  
 Child Care Resource Center at  
 Family Enrichment Network  
 607-723-8313 X829

Permission to Duplicate and Reproduce is Granted.

*Provided by*  
**Broome County Family Violence Prevention Council**  
 607-778-2153