

# Alone

# After

# School

Many children return home to empty houses after school. As a concerned parent, you can teach your child safety habits that will increase their ability to become more self-sufficient, independent, and safe. Begin practicing safety habits early, so that when your child reaches the acceptable age to be alone, they will be prepared and comfortable. Your child should be able to demonstrate that they are ready to be left home alone.

Post emergency numbers in a visible place near all phones.

- Include phone numbers for police, fire, local EMS, family doctor, poison control, parent's work, neighbors who are home, and the house address.
- Practice having your child give a simple message including name, address, and nature of the emergency.
- Practice with your child how to handle possible situations – What would you do if you smell smoke? Get out; call 911 from a safe place. What would you do if you smell gas? Get out; call 911 from a safe place. What would you do if the doorbell rings?

Phone safety.

- For incoming calls, teach your child to give short answers such as “My mom/dad can't come to the phone, may I take a message?” Children should never let the caller know parents are not home.
- If your child doesn't recognize the phone number on Caller ID, let the answering machine or voice mail pick up the call.

Establish a routine for your child and provide structure.

- Have your child call a parent, or check in with a designated person, as soon as they arrive home from school.
- Define acceptable and easy-to-fix snacks. Determine appliances that can be used according to your child's ability.
- Set limits, outline what your child may or may not do.
- Suggest positive activities, such as homework, chores, crafts, and reading.



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