

# Home Alone Basics for Parents



Our passion is SAFETY!  
Our goal is to save lives  
and reduce the risk of  
injuries.



## Safety Tips for you and your child to review before they stay home alone:

- Review with children what to do about phone calls: should they answer, screen calls with caller id or let the calls go to voice mail or an answering machine. Never tell callers that they are home alone.
- **Write down important phone numbers for them, including 911 & home address** because children may forget it in an emergency. Include someone who lives nearby that can come over quickly if needed.
- **Teach them never to open the door:** pretend no one is home.
- **If a stranger gets into the home** teach your children to get out quickly and run to a neighbor's home.
- **Stay in touch with children** Call throughout the day to ask how they are and what they are doing or when they arrive home from school. Ask children to check in before they leave the house and to call again when they return.
- **Set firm rules** make clear what children are allowed to do and what they are not allowed to do, including playing outside, having friends over, cooking, computer, TV, and video games and what the consequence are for breaking the rules.

## Stranger Danger

Most strangers are nice people, however, some are not. Unfortunately you cannot tell if a stranger is good or bad just by looking at him or her but you can tell if a situation is good or bad. If a child is asked to do something without his or her parents' permission, or to go somewhere alone with an adult, a dangerous situation may occur. If a child feels uncomfortable or scared, the situation may be dangerous. Here are some suggestions to help teach children what to do if they feel something is wrong.

**Explain what a stranger is.** Let them know strangers don't look like monsters or aliens, but instead may look like mom and dad.

- **Teach children "No, Go, Yell, Tell."** Teach them to say no, run away, yell as loud as they can and tell someone they trust if they think they are in a dangerous situation and not to worry about feeling embarrassed or hurting the person's feelings.
- **Know where your children are at all times** - Make a rule that your children must have permission and they should check in with you before going anywhere or with anyone. Make sure children have a phone number where you can be reached at all times.
- **Discuss safe places in the neighborhood** - show them safe places to play, safe roads and paths to take and safe places to go if there is trouble. Have a family code word if someone else needs to pick them up.
- **Teach children to trust their instincts** - Let them know if they ever feel scared or uncomfortable, to get away from the situation quickly and tell an adult they trust. Reassure children that you will help them when they need it.



- Have back up plan if you child misses their ride to or from school and misplaces their key.
- Have a emergency supplies available if needed: flashlight, first aid kit, battery operated or weather radio.
- Review your fire safety plan and have a meeting place outside the house. Check smoke detectors to make sure they are working. Remind your child not to play with matches, lighters, stove, fireplace or other electrical appliances.
- Discuss a safe place to go in your house in case of thunderstorms, tornadoes and earthquakes such as the basement or bathroom.
- Review how to shut off water in case a toilet overflows.
- Make a special goody box or container that has items such as games, movies, crafts, that can only be brought out when your child is home alone

Role play how to:

- Call 9-1-1
- Answer the door and phone
- Escape during a fire (set off fire alarm so the child knows what it sounds like)
- What to do during a storm
- What to do when the lights go out
- How to prepare snacks
- What to do if he or she gets sick
- What to do if he or she misses their ride to or from school
- Where to go if something looks amiss when they arrive home from school
- If there are other children at home, how to handle disputes and fighting (these topics are covered in the home alone class)

Staying home alone is often considered by many children a sign that they are getting older and can handle more responsibility. Don't forget to offer praise for a job well done when you arrive home!



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