



Safety Tips for a Child Home Alone

The most important part of the safety of your children is YOU, the parent/caregiver. It is important to practice these rules with children until they become habits. The safest children are those that receive Personal Safety Education and continue to practice the skills at home. The goal is to create confident “thinking” children who are able to act instinctively when a dangerous situation arises.

Telephone

Young children should not answer the phone. There is no “right” age for a child to begin to answer the phone. When you feel confident that your child understands the following rules then he/she is able to answer the phone.

A child should:

- Be able to let the answering machine pick up and read caller ID.
- Be able to tell the caller, “My parents can’t come to the phone right now. May I take a message?”
- Never tell the caller they are home alone.
- Be able to tell their parent/caregiver right away about the phone call.

Young children should not be left home alone. There is no “right” age for children to take on this responsibility. When you feel confident that your child understands the safety rules and would respond appropriately in an emergency then he/she is able to stay home alone.

A child should:

- Know how and when to call 911.
- Know never to answer the door.
- Understand the plan of action – to call you and tell you that someone is at the door.
- Know who to contact if you are not available.
- Should know the safest route and possible safe houses on the way when walking to and from school.

A Parent should:

- Practice skills with the child by playing the What if? Game.

- Talk directly with your child about how they feel about staying home alone.
- Create a schedule for child as to how to spend their time while home alone

“WHAT IF” GAME

Source: <https://kidsafefoundation.org/what-if-game/>

A great way to teach your children about their safety is to use the “What If” game. All it takes is you asking your child “What If” Safety Questions...See how they answer (if you have never taught your child about personal safety they will probably give you the wrong answer, when they do it’s important to stay calm and keep what we call in KidSafe a ” poker face.” When you overreact your children shut down and stop talking. The goal is to get them to continue to talk to you. If they do not give you the safest and smartest choice, this is your chance to help guide them to a safer choice. The “What if?” Game can be used as an informal way to teach children personal safety skills. Keep in mind that the game is fun and should help you to see how your child is processing how to make the safest and smartest choices.

Note: Fear is not an effective teaching tool.

Source: <https://kidsafefoundation.org/>