



## A Checklist for Leaving Older Children Home Alone

Physically, is your child able to:

- Lock and unlock doors and windows in your home?
- Do self-care tasks, such as making a sandwich, dialing the phone and writing messages?

Mentally, does your child:

- Tell time?
- Recognize danger and know when to get help?
- Understand clearly what "STRANGER" and "EMERGENCY" mean?
- Solve problems on his or her own?
- Consider how his or her actions affect others?

Socially, does your child:

- Solve conflicts with siblings with little help from adults?
- Talk easily to you about school, friends and about his or her feelings?
- Feel confident enough to contact an adult if a problem arises?

Emotionally, does your child:

- Feel confident and secure when alone?
- Seem willing to stay alone for short periods? For longer periods?
- Know how to handle fear, loneliness or boredom?
- Handle responsibilities, such as going to school on time?
- Know how to look out for younger siblings?

Before you leave your child show them:

- Where things are in the house and how they work (furnace, circuit breaker, etc).
- Where the flashlight and first aid kit are located.
- Things in the house that may make strange noises.
- How to be safe in the kitchen, including turning off the stove.
- Who to call or where to go if there is a problem.
- What they need to do as soon as they get home (lock the door, call you, etc.).
- What gas smells like when it is leaking (if applicable) and what to do.

Practice with your child:

- Safe ways to answer the phone and the door.
- How to get out if there is a fire.
- Locking and unlocking doors.

Prepare for your child:

- A phone list of people they know well, whom they can call if they need help.
- A list of house rules (for moments when friends arrive at the door).
- Healthy snack foods they can prepare without cooking.
- An extra key hidden outside in case they lock themselves out.
- Fun things for each child to do when they get home.
- Leave on lights or radio as pre-planned with them.

Protect your child:

- Lock up medicines, alcohol and weapons.
- Install smoke detectors and make sure they work.
- Let them know what time you will be home; call if you'll be late.
- Ask them how things went; allow them to suggest changes in these plans.

If your child is not ready to be home alone, contact Child Care Resource & Referral ~ Metro for free child care referrals at 801-355-4847 or 866-438-4847 or [www.cssutah.org](http://www.cssutah.org)