

# *A Checklist for Leaving Older Children Home Alone*

**Physically**, is your child able to:

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

**Mentally**, does your child:

- Tell time?
- Understand clearly what “stranger” and “emergency” mean?
- Recognize danger and know when to get help?
- Consider how his or her actions affect others?

**Socially**, does your child:

- Solve conflicts with brothers and sisters with little help from adults?
- Talk easily to you about what happens at school 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 you leave?
- Seem willing to stay alone for short periods? For longer periods?
- Know how to handle fear, loneliness or boredom?
- Know how to handle responsibility such as getting to school on time?
- Know how to look out for younger brothers and sisters?

**Before you leave, show your child:**

- Where things are in the house and how they work.
- Things in the house that may make strange noises.
- Where the flashlight and first aid kit are located.
- 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 (i.e. lock the door).
- 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 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 upon if needed.
- A list of house rules (for moments when friends arrive at the door).
- Healthy snack foods they can eat without cooking.
- An extra key hidden outside in case they lock themselves out.
- Fun things for each of them to do when they get home.

**Protect** your child: **Lock Up All Medicines, Alcohol and Weapons**

- Put up 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.



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Finally, if your child is not ready to be home alone, contact Care About Childcare - WSU at 801-626-7837 to find an appropriate provider.

[careaboutchildcare.utah.gov](http://careaboutchildcare.utah.gov) ♦ [weber.edu/cac](http://weber.edu/cac)