



THE FAMILY TREE

Home Alone Child Tips

Children are sometimes home alone while parents are working, especially this time of year with snow days becoming more frequent. It is generally believed however that children under 12 should not be left alone.

Here are some suggestions to increase the safety of your older child and ease your mind while he or she is home alone:

- Agree on ground rules for those times when you are not home, for example rules for cooking, leaving the house, having friends over, etc.
- Assign your children tasks to accomplish while you are gone. Try to keep them busy!
- Teach your child about possible contact with strangers. Establish rules about answering the phone or the door. Be sure your child understands the importance of not telling strangers they are home alone.
- Be sure telephone numbers are posted where you can be reached. Also, make sure you list numbers for fire and police, neighbors and relatives.
- If your children arrive home to an empty house, be sure to call and check in with them.
- Enroll your children in a course on safety procedures. Their safety is related to their knowledge of how to protect themselves. Check with the YMCA, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts or your local hospital for courses.
- Talk to your children about their concerns when they are home alone. Make sure everyone understands each other.
- Remember, with proper guidelines, being home for limited periods of time can increase independence, responsibility and confidence in your children!