

Staying Home Alone

The checklist is provided as a tool to help parents consider the appropriateness of self-care for their children. It should be used as a guide only, NOT as the deciding factor. Parent and child should complete the checklist independently. Are there differences in how the situation is viewed? Discuss the differences. Use this tool as one factor in making your decision.

SELF-CARE READINESS CHECKLIST

1. Yes or No - The child has indicated an interest or willingness to stay on his or her own.
2. Yes or No - The child feels safe when alone and fears (such as darkness) or nightmares are minimal when adults are not around.
3. Yes or No - Other children will be present. (If yes, please consider the pressure adults face when caring for little ones and how a child babysitter is less equipped to deal with that pressure)
4. Yes or No - The child has demonstrated correct procedures for handling strangers at the door.
5. Yes or No - The child can repeat and dial the home phone number.
6. Yes or No - The child can handle telephone calls correctly.
7. Yes or No - The child knows how to reach parents or other responsible adults by phone.
8. Yes or No- There are established guidelines for the child's use of the Internet.
9. Yes or No - The child can name two adults to contact in case of an emergency.
10. Yes or No - The child can explain how to handle minor first aid for cuts and scrapes. And knows where to locate first aid supplies.



11. Yes or No - The child can identify two escape routes from the home in case of fire.
12. Yes or No - The child will tell parents or child care providers about daily events without prompting.
13. Yes or No - The child can name five household rules and identify which ones were followed the previous week.
14. Yes or No - The child can give an example of a time when they had to figure out and decide what the right thing to do is, without adult input.

Respond (hardly ever, sometimes, often, most of the time, or always) to the following statements describing the child.

The child...

Completes household chores

Completes homework

Arrives at school on time

Arrives home on time

Let's parents/Adults know where he or she is going before leaving

Asks for help when problems arise

After completing the checklist, examine the answers. If you answers are mostly "no" it may suggest the child is not yet ready to stay alone or may need more information, training in self-care skills, or an alternative care situation if a parent is to be away.

If your answers are "yes" to all questions, your child may be ready to be home alone. But even if the child is ready, self-care may not be wise. Always factor in the amount of time the child will be alone and whether your neighborhood is safe.

