



At Home Alone: A Parent's Guide

Your child comes home from school at 3:00, but you don't get home from work until 6:00. They are at home alone for those few hours every weekday. What do they do until you arrive home?



Most likely, he or she gets a snack or talks on the phone. Maybe he or she watches some TV or starts some homework assignments. But since you're not there, you worry. Just like the majority of American parents who work and have to leave their children on their own after school every day, you are anxious about your child's safety. But by following the safeguards listed below, you can help ease some of this worry by taking basic precautionary measures when you're not around.

Remember - always know the three "W's": Where your kids are, What they're doing, and Who they're with!

WHAT TO TEACH YOUR "HOME ALONE" CHILDREN

- Have your child check in with you or a neighbor immediately after arriving home.
- Ensure they know how to call 9-1-1 and how to give directions to your home, in case of emergency
- Make sure they know your family's emergency plan - if you do not have a plan visit www.ready.gov for more information on creating one
- Teach them how to properly use the door and window locks, and the alarm system if you have one - particularly the "panic" feature of your alarm system
- To never let anyone into your home without asking your permission - no repairmen, delivery persons etc - NO ONE - even if they appear to be in a company uniform.
- To never let a person at the door or on the phone know that they're alone. Teach them to say "Mom or Dad can't come to the phone (or door) right now, may I take a message?"
- How to escape in case of fire - do you call 911 first then exit, or exit and call 911? Make sure they know all available exits and what a smoke (or CO) alarm sounds like and what to do if it sounds.

Often times, if you can come home (or call) unexpectedly to check on your child - perhaps even have a trusted friend/neighbor check in - you can be sure that they are following your rules and staying as safe as possible while you are at work.