

HOME ALONE:

Is your
child
ready?



As a parent, there comes a time when you begin to consider if your child is old enough, mature enough, and physically ready to stay home alone.

Deciding when your child is ready to stay home alone can be challenging. You know your child better than anyone, so we at Action for Children, have prepared a guide to help you and your child decide if it is the right time to take on this new, exciting responsibility.

Action for Children



Factors To Consider



Willingness: Consider your child's confidence, comfort level and willingness to be left home alone.

Safety: Consider the safety of your neighborhood.

Responsibility: Does your child follow rules, make good decisions and understand that there are positive and negative consequences of their choices?

Time: Consider the length of time and how often your child will be left alone. Does your child know your phone number and how to use the phone?

Location: Can you or another trusted adult be reached and return home quickly in case of an emergency?

Readiness Checklist Questions To Ask

	yes	no
Can your child lock and unlock doors?		
Does your child know your phone number and how to use the phone?		
Can your child read, tell time, and follow directions?		
Does your child know when and how to call 911 and provide their name, address and phone number in case of emergency?		
Does your child consistently use good judgment and problem solving skills?		
Does your child know basic safety procedures and how to respond (first aid, weather related warnings, home evacuation plan)?		

The state of Ohio does not specify at what age a child can legally stay home alone. Experts suggest a child not be left alone until age 12.

Tips For Success



Rules: Work with your child to create a set of rules that they can understand and follow:

- Set a time to call and check in each day
- Decide if they are allowed to leave the house or let friends in the home
- How and when to safely answer the door or phone
- Who to call or what they should do in case there is a problem



Routines: Create a structured routine that your child can follow each day:

- Set a time for your child to check in with you when they arrive home
- Prepare healthy snacks or meals they can eat without cooking
- Create a schedule to define what should be done while at home (homework, chores, screen time, internet etc.)

Practice: Like any new skill, it is important to practice with your child before leaving them home alone for long periods of time:

- Give your child scenarios of possible things that may happen when they are home alone. This will help them gain confidence in their decision making and learn your expectations.
- Practice leaving them home alone for short periods of time (run a quick errand, go to a neighbor's house). Gradually increase the time you are away until you are both confident they are ready.
- Create speed dials or program important phone numbers into the phone your child will be using and practice how and when to make those calls.



MY CONTACTS:

My Information (Important Information For Where I Live):

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

NOTES

Important Contact Information (Mom, Dad, Aunt, Uncle, Grandparents):

NAME

PHONE NUMBER

NOTES

Emergency Contacts (Neighbors, Friends, Emergency Services):

NAME

PHONE NUMBER

NOTES

If you determine that your child is not ready to stay home alone, we can help. Contact us. Our staff can help you with your child care and early learning search by phone or internet. This is a FREE service!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Call: 614-224-0222

Email: childcareresources@actionforchildren.org

Visit: www.actionforchildren.org



Action for Children



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