



# Resources for Child Caring

*Raising the standard of care for children*

## COUNTY SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

The guidelines below are not the law nor are they a recommendation. They are minimal acceptable standards which if not met may result in a Child Protection Assessment.

**Taken from:**

<http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/NR/rdonlyres/146D7B60-7FD5-46C8-898133E429975DDC/1679/ChildProtectionScreening.pdf>

(8/2006)

**WE WILL ASSESS THE FOLLOWING REPORTS:** (Taken from information received from Department of Human Services, Division of Child Protection, Ramsey County, Minnesota.)

**AGES 7 AND YOUNGER:** All reports of children left alone for any period of time.

**AGES 8–10:** All reports of children who are left alone for more than 2-3 hours. It is acceptable in most cases for children to be at home while parents run an errand or to be home alone before and/or after school until parents return home from work.

**AGES 10–13:** All reports where children are alone for more than 8-12 hours. It is acceptable for children to be alone all day until parent returns home from work, but it is assumed a parent, guardian, or caretaker will be there in the evening.

**AGES 14 AND OLDER:** All reports where a parent has been gone for 24 hours or more if children do not know the whereabouts of the parent or when they will return. It is acceptable for children (14 and older) to be home alone for 24 hours or more provided they have knowledge of where the parent is and how to reach them or a designated caretaker if needed.

## GUIDELINES FOR OLDER CHILDREN WHO SUPERVISE YOUNGER CHILDREN

**AGES 11-14:** It is acceptable to babysit younger children all day with the expectation that a parent/guardian/caretaker will be returning to supervise children later that same day.

**AGES 15 AND OLDER:** It is acceptable to baby-sit younger children for more than 24 hours.

These guidelines are intended to provide a basic framework and standard to follow in providing information to parents and reporters of child neglect. Each inquiry and report must be judged individually not only on the basis of age but by also taking the following questions into consideration:

1. What is the maturity level of the child?
2. How accessible is the parent/guardian/or designated caretaker to the children by phone and/or in person?
3. What is the health status of the child, i.e. presence of mental, physical problems or disabilities?
4. What is the behavioral history of the child, i.e. suicidal, fire setting, delinquency, vandalism, assault?
5. Is a young child using the kitchen stove, iron or appliances which pose a danger because of his/her age?
6. Have parents discussed an escape plan or held a fire drill with the child?
7. Does the residence have a smoke detector?
8. Are there unusual hazards in the home?
9. What is the child's reaction to being left alone?

## CHILDREN ALONE - SAFE AT HOME

### IF YOU MUST LEAVE FIRST IN THE MORNING:

- Have your children get their clothes and school things ready the night before. Make sure they wake up with plenty of time to get ready so they aren't rushing around forgetting things.
- Always let them know what time you will be home. If you're going to be late, call them. Before your child will be home by themselves for the first time, think about any problems that might come up and how you can make this easy for your children.
- Talk to your children. Tell them why you will have to be away from home and explain that they will have to be able to care for themselves in your absence.
- Have a fire drill and talk about different ways to get out of the house. Be sure to practice!



## IF CHILDREN ARE ALONE AFTER SCHOOL:

- Give each of your children a key. Show them how to pin it inside a pocket so it doesn't show. Practice locking and unlocking the door with them. Make an extra key and leave it with a neighbor or in a hiding place in case your children lose their key.
- Walk your children around your home, showing them how to turn the heat on, where you keep fresh batteries, and how to put them into a flashlight.
- Point out the smoke detectors and tell them to leave the house immediately if one of them goes off. Instruct them to never use matches or candles when home alone, and make sure they know where to find the first aid kit. They should also know never to take any sort of medicine without checking with you first.
- Decide if your children can use the stove or microwave when you are not at home.
- Sign your children up for after school programs at the school, church or community center.
- Make a list of things for them to do while they are home alone.
- Make sure there is a healthy snack for your child to eat.
- Leave a light on if they will be coming home in the dark.
- Make arrangements so your child can call certain neighbors or relatives if you can't be reached. Keep these numbers by the telephone along with a list of emergency numbers, especially 911. Include your home address and telephone number on the list.
- Instruct your child to lock the door, pull the curtains and call you as soon as they are home.
- Go over rules such as who can come over, how much television watching is allowed and what chores need to be done. Post them on the refrigerator.
- Teach your child how to answer the telephone and what to do if someone knocks at the door. Make sure they know to never open the door unless it is someone who you said could come into the home.
- Finally, when you do come home, ask your child how things went while they were alone.

Information taken from: <http://www.familymanagement.com>

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