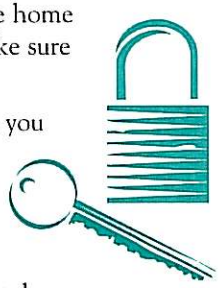
Neighborhood Involvement

If a child is going to be home by him/herself, parents need to consider establishing a Neighborhood Watch or Child Care Network.

- Neighborhood Watch: A designated person would be responsible to watch for the children coming home in the neighborhood. If children do not arrive home at a specific time, a designated person would follow up and check with the child's school, friends, etc.
- In some communities, the stay-at-home parents organize their neighborhood to help out in child care emergency situations.
- If all of the neighbors are working, a Child Care Network can be established. Each participating family chooses one day to be responsible for emergency care. Part-time workers might find this more convenient than those who work every day. But, full-time workers may be willing to pay for help or to call upon relatives to fill in for them when they are on duty.
- Every parent should have the phone numbers (work and home) of participating members of the child care network.

Protect your child:

- Lock up all medicines, alcohol and weapons!
- Put up smoke detectors in the home and check periodically to make sure they work.
- Let children know what time you will be home; call if you are going to be late.
- Ask children how things were when they were alone; let them make suggestions for changes.



Checklist for Leaving Children Home Alone

PHYSICALLY, is your child able to?

- ❑ Lock and unlock doors and windows of your home?
- ❑ Take care of themselves by making a sandwich, dialing the phone, writing messages?

MENTALLY, does your child?

- ❑ Tell time? Recognize danger?
- ❑ Understand clearly what "stranger" and "emergency" mean?
- ❑ Solve problems on his/her own?

SOCIALLY, does your child?

- ❑ Solve conflicts with brothers and sisters with little help from adults?
- ❑ Talk easily to you about school, friends and about his/her feelings?

EMOTIONALLY, does your child?

- ❑ Feel confident and secure when alone?
- ❑ Seem willing to stay alone for periods of time?
- ❑ Know how to handle loneliness and boredom?
- ❑ Handle responsibility, such as getting to school on time?

BEFORE YOU LEAVE YOUR CHILD, show them:

- ❑ Where things are in the house and how they work.
- ❑ Where the flashlight and first aid kit is located.
- ❑ Things in the house that may make strange noises.
- ❑ How to be safe in the kitchen.
- ❑ Who to call if there is a problem.
- ❑ What they need to do as soon as they get home (lock the door, call you, etc.)

PRACTICE with your child:

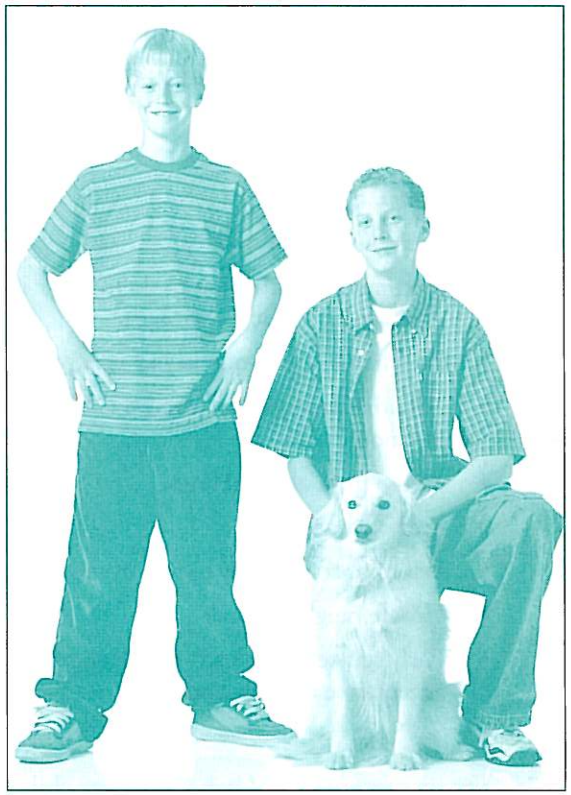
- ❑ Safe ways to answer the phone and the door.
- ❑ How to get out if there is a fire.
- ❑ Locking and unlocking doors.

PREPARE for your child:

- ❑ A phone list of people they know well, whom they can call if they need help.
- ❑ A list of house rules.
- ❑ Healthy snack foods they can prepare without cooking.
- ❑ Fun things for each child to do when they get home.
- ❑ Leave on lights or radio as pre-planned with them.

Home Alone

What Are the Dangers?



Department of Workforce Services
Office of Child Care
801-526-4340
1-800-622-7390
jobs.utah.gov/occ

Child care Office of

Utah's Job Connection

With Special Thanks for Gathering Information to:
Weber/Morgan Child Abuse Prevention Council

01-40-0503

Home Alone – What Are the Dangers?

The elementary school years are a time of growing independence for most children. During this time children are given more and more opportunities to care for themselves.

What are the dangers of leaving children home alone?

- No adult supervision
- Boredom
- Lack of self care skills
- Not familiar with what to do in an emergency. What if I get hurt?
- Loneliness – vulnerability to peer pressure
- Afraid of emergencies-excessive fear-paranoia
- Abuse from older siblings
- Fear of strangers
- Fear that someone is hiding in the house
- Unsafe neighborhoods
- Early self-reliance leads to a decreasing acceptance of adult authority

Seventy-six percent of all Utah school age children 5-12 years old have parents in the work force, creating the potential for many children to be left unattended. National studies indicate that the hours between 3:00-6:00 p.m. are high risk for children to be involved in gang activities, violence, pregnancy, and other problematic behavior. Many children are not prepared to be left home alone.

Studies Show that Unsupervised Children Are Especially at Risk for the Following:

FACT: Children in self-care are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, truancy from school, stress, poor grades, and substance use. This includes elementary and middle school-age children. Most juvenile crime occurs during the hours of 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

FACT: Whether or not their parents are employed, research indicates that what children do during non-school hours has a critical impact on school achievement and long term success.

Opportunities / Options Parents Can Provide For Their Children

Out Of School Time Programs:

Out of School Time Programs offer the best choice for children and youth.

Neighborhood Involvement:

Neighborhoods can work together to develop safe resources for children and youth.

Self-Care: If a parent has no other option, then children in self-care need to be well prepared. If you are considering self-care, review the checklist included in this pamphlet.

Every parent wants the best for their children. If you do leave your children alone, make sure they are safe, happy and secure. We hope the suggestions included in this pamphlet will help you to ensure your child's safety.

Community Offers Programs For Out of School Time

The State of Utah is providing youth with positive out-of-school time activities.

School Age Programs Are:

- Usually defined as formally organized services which 5-14 year old children attend regularly before and/or after school and in summer programs.
- Before and after school care programs are held in school, recreation facilities, churches, and child care centers.

School Age Programs Offer:

- A safe and nurturing environment where children are free to strengthen relationships, learn new skills, and gain self-esteem.
- Development of interpersonal skills.
- Time to do homework.
- A chance to build friendships and improve social skills.

These programs can also encourage children to regulate their own behavior with guidance and support of caring adults.

The Office of Child Care offers assistance and technical support in the development and start up of school age programs. To receive information on how to start a program in your community, call:

Office of Child Care
School Age Program Specialist
801-526-4340 or toll free 1-800-622-7390

Your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency can provide free information on school age programs in your area. For the number of your local Resource and Referral Agency, call:

Office of Child Care
801-526-4340 or toll free 1-800-622-7390
jobs.utah.gov/occ