

## ★ Home Alone Phone List ★

Parent's name \_\_\_\_\_

Workplace \_\_\_\_\_

Work number \_\_\_\_\_

Cell number \_\_\_\_\_

Relative's or neighbor's name  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Police \_\_\_\_\_

Fire \_\_\_\_\_

Ambulance \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

Other people to call  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**For more information call 1-800-342-PIRC (7472)  
or visit [www.preventchildabuseny.org](http://www.preventchildabuseny.org)**

For more home alone materials as well as information about child abuse and neglect and how to prevent it, call:

**Prevention Information Resource  
Center and Parent Helpline  
1-800-342-PIRC (7472)**

A program of:

### **Prevent Child Abuse New York**

- Increasing public awareness about solutions to the problem of child abuse.
- Serving as a resource for families, individuals and organizations
- Advocating for expanded and improved programs and policies to prevent child abuse
- Fostering a statewide network committed to child abuse prevention



[www.preventchildabuseny.org](http://www.preventchildabuseny.org)



## Children at Home Alone



Sometimes child care plans fall through. Sometimes parents are unable to find any child care at all. There are many reasons why parents have to confront the anxiety and fear of leaving their children home alone.

Each child is different. Some children are simply too young to be left alone. Others enjoy caring for themselves and easily accept the responsibilities. Some children may get into trouble or become lonely, bored or scared when left alone.

There are many things you should think about before leaving your child home alone. ▶▶



**Prevent Child Abuse  
New York**



### Are your children ready to be left alone?

Here are some questions to consider before deciding whether your children should be left home alone:

- What are the children's ages and level of maturity?
- Consider the health of your children. Will they have to give each other or themselves any medications?
- Do any of your children have special needs or require constant supervision?
- Can they be trusted to follow rules?
- What is the reason for leaving your children? Is there any way they can come with you or stay with another adult?
- How long will they be left alone?
- What responsibilities will be assigned to them? Will a young child be expected to prepare meals or baby-sit for an even younger child?
- Is an older or adolescent sibling willing and able to care for a younger child?
- Who will be available in case of an emergency? Do your children have the telephone number of someone to call for help?
- Is there a past history of injuries or accidents when your children were left alone?

from Recognizing Child Abuse by Douglas J. Besharov, 1990.



### If you decide to leave your children home alone, be sure to prepare them for the experience.

This is an opportunity to discuss all aspects of safety with your children and to help them build their confidence

and self-esteem.

Talk to your children about their feelings about being left alone. Take their worries and fears into consideration. **Go over the following home alone strategies with your children:**

**Plan the safest route to and from school.** Walk the route both ways with your children and point out safe spots, such as stores, shopping malls, and friends' houses. Make sure your children's house keys don't have a name or address on them. Tell them to call you as soon as they get home.

**Teach your children not to go into the house if a window is broken or a door is ajar.** Make sure they can lock and unlock the doors with ease and operate the alarm system if you have one. Tell them to lock all doors once they are inside. Ask your neighbor to keep a spare key in case your kids lose theirs.

**Teach your children how to call 911 and other emergency numbers in case of an emergency.** Make sure they know their names, address, phone number including area code, and how to give directions to your home.

**Ask a trusted neighbor, friend or relative to check in with the kids.** Create a safety net of people and community resources for your children so they always have someone who can get to them quickly.



### Tell your children never to accept gifts or rides from people they don't know or don't feel comfortable with.

Teach them to avoid playing outside or walking alone. Make up code words with your children so

they can communicate if they are in danger.

**Review fire and safety rules.** Teach them how to use a fire extinguisher and what to do if there is a fire. Make sure there is a working fire extinguisher in every room.

### Set clear rules about what your children can and can not do and what you expect from them.

Discuss with your children the routines you expect them to follow regarding household chores, having friends over, homework, television, and video games.

**Anticipate things your children may need.** Keep a list of important phone numbers near every phone in the house. Keep easy to prepare snacks on hand so your children don't have to use the stove, microwave or knives. Have flashlights and first-aid kits in the house.

### Always let your children know where you are.

If you are not going to be home at your normal time, let your children know you'll be late. Let a trusted adult know your children may need to reach them if you are not available and make sure your children know how to get in touch with that person.

### Rehearse different scenarios with your children.

What would they do if the doorbell rang? If they received a frightening phone call? If you were late getting home?

