

How Old is Old Enough?

An informational fact sheet for parents about kids being left home alone and caring for other children

Age Related Guidelines:

- *Children age 7 and under should not be left alone for any period of time*
- *Children ages 8-10 may not be left alone for more than three hours*
- *Children ages 11-13 may not be left alone for more than 12 hours*
- *Children ages 14 - 15 may not be left alone for more than 24 hours*
- *Children ages 16-17 may be left alone for more than 24 hours with a plan in place concerning how to respond to an emergency*

Caring for other Children:

- *Children under age 11 should not provide child care*
- *Children ages 11-15 who are placed in a child care role are subject to the same restrictions of being left alone as listed above*
- *Children ages 16-17 may be left alone for more than 24 hours with adequate adult back up supervision*

Things to Consider:

As a parent you often wonder at what age your child can be left unsupervised or can baby-sit other children. The following are some guidelines to consider for leaving your child unattended or allowing them to baby-sit other children:

- The maturity level of your child.
- The availability of parent, guardian, or caretaker by phone or in person.
- The health status of your child.
- Your child's awareness of the dangers of appliance use (stove, iron) or unusual hazards in the home.
- Discussion of an escape plan or fire drill participation with your child.
- Discuss the locations of your smoke detectors with your child. (remember to check your batteries two times a year!)
- What is your child's reaction to being left alone?
- Consider enrolling your child in a baby-sitting clinic. Check your community education booklet or call your child's school.