

## HOME ALONE

As a working parent you may, at times, have to work longer hours and this may require leaving your child alone at home.

Before leaving your child alone, you must ask yourself if you have provided him with the skills and information he will need that will prepare him to safely cope with any situation that may arise. To know if your child is ready to be left home alone, ask yourself the following questions:



- Is he mature enough to respect established rules?
- Is he able to problem-solve and make responsible decisions?
- Is he confident enough to react wisely to emergency situations that might arise?

If you answered YES to all these questions, it is important to prepare him so he feels confident in as many situations as possible. The Missing Children's Network recommends that parents reinforce the following safety measures:

- Instruct your child to never say that he is home alone.
- Teach your child not to open the door or talk to anyone who comes to the door unless the person has been pre-approved by you.
- Ensure that your child knows who to call and what to say in an emergency. Be sure to post all emergency phone numbers near your telephone, including your home phone number and address. It is very easy for anyone, especially a child, to panic in an emergency.
- Make sure your child knows how to lock and unlock all of the doors and windows. He should also know how to arm and disarm the alarm system if you have one.
- Establish an information/message centre in the house (on the fridge or bulletin board) where you and your kids can leave notes detailing where everyone is and when they will return. Have a firm rule that no one can leave the house without filling it in and that includes you!
- Use caller ID or an answering machine to screen calls. Teach your child to never say he is alone when answering the phone. Tell him to say that his mom/dad is busy and will call back.
- Teach your child basic first aid and keep a first aid kit in the house.
- Call and check on your child periodically and always let him know if you are running late.

If you leave your children home alone, it is important that you establish a clear set of guidelines for them to follow.

By clearly defining what they can and cannot do in your absence, it helps ensure their personal safety. As well, it prepares them to handle with confidence, situations that may arise while you are not present.



	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Surf the Net			
Play outdoors			
Invite friends over			
Go over to a friend's home			
Use the pool			
Cook			
Etc.			

For more information regarding the Missing Children's Network personal safety workshops, offered year-round, please contact our offices at 514 843-4333 or visit our website at [www.missingchildrensnetwork.ngo](http://www.missingchildrensnetwork.ngo)