



When is it okay to leave a child home alone?

There *are* guidelines here in Northern Virginia to help parents. Remember, it's all about keeping your child **SAFE**.

Is your child 8 years old? 9? 10?

There is no age that means a child definitely has the skills and maturity level to handle being left alone. Every child is different, maturing and developing life skills at very different ages. Even children in the same home are often ready at different ages!

Ask questions like these to determine your child's skills and maturity level:

- Can my child solve basic problems? Discuss "What if?" questions to see how your child would handle different situations (a knock at the door, broken glass, etc.)
- Does my child follow directions and remember instructions?
- Can my child say "no" to friends who might encourage him/her to break rules?
- Does my child have trouble getting to or from school on time?
- Can my child be away from adults without feeling lonely or afraid?
- Does my child read and write well enough to take telephone messages?
- Can my child ask for help from friends and neighbors?
- Does my child understand the role of police officers, firefighters and rescue squads?
- How does my child feel about being left alone?

Are you ready for the responsibility of leaving your child home alone?

- Can you stay in touch and supervise your child even if you're not at home?
- If not, will a trusted nearby friend or relative be accessible by phone and able to help in case of an emergency?
- Have you discussed and posted rules? Have you prepared your home so that it is safe?

Each jurisdiction in Northern Virginia provides different age guidelines. **In our area, most require that a child be between 8 and 10 years old before a parent even consider leaving them alone.** Find your city or county below for specific age suggestions and additional resources:

Alexandria: 703-838-0800

Arlington: 703-228-1500

Fairfax: 703-324-7400

Loudoun: 703-771-5437

Prince William: 703-792-7500

Or visit our website for *all* of the local supervision guidelines:

www.scanva.org

Don't Forget!
No matter where you live, Supervision Guidelines are only meant to help *guide* you as you make the best possible judgements for your child's safety and well-being. They are not simple "rules" for any and every family. **Take the time to evaluate your child's unique development!**

Parenting can be tough. Asking for help doesn't have to be. For more information, call 703-820-9001
Brought to you by the Allies in Prevention Coalition and SCAN of Northern Virginia