

Safe Supervision of Children

One of the most important ways to keep children safe is for children to be supervised by an adult or other responsible caregiver. Child Protection will assign a social worker to look into the safety of a child if the rules below are not followed for children:

- Under the age of 8 are never left alone for any period of time
- Age 8 through 10 may be left alone for less than three hours
- Age 11 through 13 may be left alone for less than twelve hours
- Age 14 and 15 may be left alone for less than 24 hours
- Age 16 and 17 may be left alone for longer if there is a plan in place about how to respond to an emergency

At what age can children babysit other children?

Children under age eleven should not provide child care to other children. For children age eleven and older who are providing child care, the same limits apply to them based on their age as described above. For example, a twelve-year-old who is babysitting still cannot be left alone more than twelve hours.

Other factors impact when children can be left alone.

Age matters, but your child may need to be older depending on abilities, activities, and environment.

Child Protection may assign a social worker if a child still seems unsafe alone based on these factors:

- A child's age, mental ability, and maturity level
- Accessibility of the parent, guardian, or designated caretaker to a child by phone and/or in person
- The presence of intellectual deficits, psychological issues, mental health concerns, and/or physical problems like illness or disabilities
- Behavioral history of a child, including suicidal thoughts or actions, fire setting, delinquency, vandalism, or assault
- A child's age if using the kitchen stove, an iron, or other appliance
- Fire safety including a well-understood escape plan created by the parent / guardian, a fire drill rehearsed with a child, a working fire/smoke detector in the home
- Any unusual hazards in the home that reasonably cause extra risk, including unsecured/accessible firearms and ammunition
- If the child feels confident and safe when left alone

Questions? Call Children and Family Intake: 952.891.7459

Source: *Minnesota Child Maltreatment Intake, Screening and Response Path Guidelines DHS-5144 12/15* and *Minnesota Statutes 626.556, Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors*