

Is Your Child Ready to Be Home Alone?



The majority of children are developmentally ready to be home alone around the age of 12 or 13. Each child's maturity and abilities can be different, so use your own judgement when deciding if your child is ready to be home alone. Kansas does not have regulations or laws about when a child is considered old enough to stay at home alone, but here are some guidelines to help you make this important decision.



Ages 7-9

Children ages 7-9 may be left alone for short periods of time during the day. They should not be responsible for other children in the home.
**Children under age 7 should never be left without adult supervision.*



Ages 10+

Children ages 10 and older may be left alone, depending on factors such as length of time, time of day and their maturity level.

The first time your kids stay home alone, it should be for a short time and you should be nearby. Only leave your child home alone if they feel comfortable and are mature enough to follow safety and ground rules that you have established.

When you feel your child is ready, it's important to set them up for success.



Stay Connected: Your child needs access to a phone that's fully charged, and a list of numbers to call or text in case of questions or emergencies. If possible, include a neighbor or other trusted adult nearby.



Teach Them When to Call 9-1-1: Talk about different reasons they might need to call 9-1-1 and teach them their street address to let emergency responders know where to go.



In Case of Fire: Make sure they know the sound of the smoke and carbon monoxide alarm and practice two ways out of each room. Remind them to get out as quickly as possible, and don't go back in the house for items or pets.



Severe Weather: Teach them the sound of weather alerts or sirens and practice going to your designated tornado shelter.



Lock the Doors: Remind them not to answer the door or tell anyone over the phone or online that they are home without an adult.



First Aid: Show them where to find the first aid kit and teach them basic first aid, such as how to treat cuts and burns.



Avoid Cooking: Have ready-to-eat snacks and meals so kids don't have to cook or use knives. If an older child is cooking or using the microwave, remind them never to leave the stove unattended and be cautious when removing items from the microwave to prevent serious scalds and burns.



The Pool is Closed: Don't allow children to be in or near a swimming pool without adult supervision.



Safe Storage: Safely store any weapons, medication or potential poisons. Teach kids not to play with lighters or matches, and don't burn candles when adults are not home. Do not take any medicine without permission from a parent.



Put It in Writing: Fill out the other side of this handout or keep a notebook with information and rules so your child knows what to do. You can add any additional house rules/chores/expectations you may have.

Emergency Contact Numbers:

Parent or guardian (name and number) _____

2nd Parent or Relative (name and number) _____

Neighbor (full name and number) _____

Police/Fire/EMS: **9-1-1**

The Poison Center Hotline: **800-222-1222**

My street address (if I need to call 9-1-1): _____

What time is your parent/guardian expected to return home? ____:____am/pm

- ✓ Do not tell anyone over the phone or on social media you are home alone.
- ✓ Lock doors and do not open the door for strangers.
- ✓ Know the sound of a smoke and CO alarm and practice your home fire drill – 2 ways out of every room. Identify a safe meeting space outside and go directly there before calling for help.
- ✓ Know the sound of a tornado siren and where to shelter during severe weather.
- ✓ Know where to find the first-aid kit.
- ✓ Learn basic first aid to treat a cut or a burn.
- ✓ Do not use knives or heat to cook and be cautious when getting hot items out of the microwave.
- ✓ No swimming in pools if an adult is not home.
- ✓ Do not take any medication without permission from a parent/guardian.
- ✓ Do not touch firearms or other weapons in the house.
- ✓ Complete homework and chores.

Chores I am expected to complete (Homework, clean room, feed pet, fold laundry, etc):

House Rules (TV, computer or video games, having friends over, etc.)

For more information and prevention tips, visit safekids.org.

Appendix 1B-A, Revised April 2026

