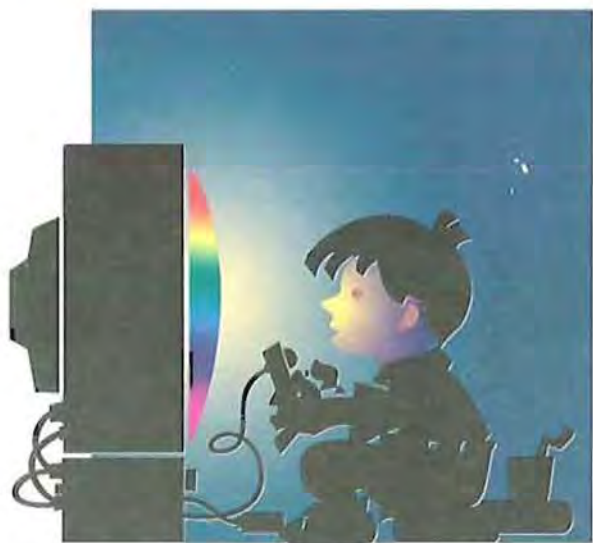


# Guidelines For Children Left Alone



Oklahoma Department  
of  
Human Services

# Recommended Guidelines for Parental Decision Making

## Pre-School/Kindergarten

- ❖ Infants and children under six years of age should never be left alone without adult supervision.

## Grade School

- ❖ In general, grade school children who demonstrate the ability to be responsible and mature may be left alone one-two hours during the day with access to a responsible adult and not caring for younger children.

## Middle School

- ❖ In general, middle school children who demonstrate the ability to be self-sufficient may be left alone for up to four hours during day and evening hours. They may care for one-two younger children if there is constant access to a responsible adult.



## **Child Protective Services Response to Reports of Children Left Alone**

The focus of OKDHS Child Welfare Services is to respond to situations where children are reported to be unsafe or at risk of harm. Action is contingent upon the age of the child and the degree of danger.

OKDHS staff cannot remove children from their home, however, if it is determined that a child cannot take care of himself/herself and there is no responsible adult available, the child may be placed into police protective custody.



In Oklahoma there are no statutory or public policy requirements regarding the age a child must be in order to be left alone. The safety and well being of children is considered to be a parental responsibility and it is a parental decision to determine that his/her child, six years of age or older, is mature enough to care for himself/herself in the absence of an adult.

## **Considerations When Leaving A Child Alone:**

- 1. Does the child have the maturity to be left alone, regardless of the child's age?*
- 2. How long will the child be alone?*
- 3. Will the child be alone during the day or at night?*
- 4. Is the surrounding neighborhood safe?*
- 5. Is there immediate access to an adult?*
- 6. Does the child have the knowledge to know what to do in an emergency?*
- 7. Is the child caring for other children?*
- 8. Does the child know how to use household appliances properly?*
- 9. Are other children visiting in the home?*
- 10. Does the child know the parents' whereabouts at all times?*
- 11. Is the child comfortable being left alone?*



## Children Left Alone





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