

Community Resources

DCHS Child Protective Services
703.746.5800 (24-hour Hotline)
www.alexandriava.gov/ChildAbuse

DCHS Early Childhood Division
For child care resources.
703.746.KIDS (5437)
www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS

The Campagna Center
Child care programs, including Head Start, from newborn through school-age.
703.549.0111
www.campagnacenter.org

Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities
For school-age child programs.
703.746.4343
www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation

The American Red Cross
For training and certification in babysitting, child care, and first aid. On-line and classroom options available.
703.549.8300
www.redcrossna.org

Stop Child Abuse Now of Northern Virginia (SCAN)
For parenting education and resources.
703.820.9001
www.scanva.org

Your Family Plan

These are some of the most important topics to discuss and answer together.

Who should I call in an emergency?

NAME _____ PHONE NUMBER _____

NAME _____ PHONE NUMBER _____

When am I allowed to use the phone?

What should I do if someone knocks on the door?

What should I do if I am locked out?

When should I call 911?

Practice staying home alone and what to do in these scenarios.

Home Alone?

Child Supervision Guidelines



Department of
Community and
Human Services

703.746.5902
www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS

Is my child ready?

There are no laws in Virginia that say when or for how long a child can be left alone. Working with other jurisdictions in Northern Virginia, Alexandria has developed these supervision guidelines for parents and caretakers to consider before leaving a child alone.

Parents are ultimately responsible for making decisions about their children's safety. Every child is different and must be assessed based on their maturity, skills and comfort level to be home alone.

Is my child ready? Does he or she ...

- understand instructions and follow important rules?
- know how to ask for help from friends, neighbors, and police?
- make good decisions when away from you or other adults?
- know when to contact you and 911 when needed?
- feel comfortable and confident about staying home alone?



Guidelines

SUPERVISION

8 YEARS AND YOUNGER should always be in the care of a responsible person. Children this age should *never be left unsupervised* in homes, cars, playgrounds or yards.

9-10 YEARS OLD may be ready to be left unsupervised up to **1.5 hours during daylight** and early evening hours.

11-12 YEARS OLD may be ready to be left unsupervised up to **3 hours during daylight** and early evening hours.

13-15 YEARS OLD may be ready to be left unsupervised more than three hours but **not overnight**.

16 AND OLDER may be ready to be left unsupervised **overnight for one to two days**, with a plan in place.

BABYSITTING

10-12 YEARS OLD may provide care of other children for up to three hours with the help of an adult.

13-15 YEARS OLD may babysit infants and children but not overnight.

16 AND OLDER may watch children overnight.

Are my home and family ready?

- 1. Write family rules together.** Discuss rules for phone and screen use, cooking, taking care of siblings, doing homework, going outside, having friends over and answering the door.
- 2. Help your child memorize their address** and important telephone numbers.
- 3. Review and post a list of emergency contacts.** Make sure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working.
- 4. Have a spare key available.** Leave an extra key with a neighbor or trusted adult. Make sure your child knows how to use the door and window locks.
- 5. Let a trusted neighbor know** that your child may be home alone. Designate a safe place where your child can go if he or she feels scared or unsafe.
- 6. Check in with your child** by phone/text regularly.
- 7. Teach home safety**, including proper use of kitchen utensils and appliances if allowed. Safely secure any dangerous items.
- 8. Have a plan for emergencies.** Discuss what to do when your regular schedule breaks down because of delays or other unexpected occurrences.