



SOCIAL SERVICES

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Rice County Social Services Home Alone Guidelines

These “Home Alone” guidelines, used by the Rice County Social Services, have been provided by the Minnesota Department of Human Services as part of the *Minnesota Child Maltreatment Intake, Screening, and Response Path Guidelines*.

Factors affecting screening decisions regarding supervision or child care arrangements include but are not limited to: a child’s age, maturity and developmental level, accessibility of the parent/guardian or designated caretaker, the presence of medical or mental health concerns, intellectual deficits, behavior problems, level of aggression, designated responsibilities (such as cooking), comfort level, as well as establishment of understood and practiced escape and emergency plans, and unusual hazards in the home.

Reports alleging inadequate supervision or child care arrangements may be screened in for a child protection response, including but not limited to:

- Children age 7 and under who are left alone for any period of time
- Children ages 8-10 who are left alone for more than three hours
- Children ages 11-13 who are left alone for more than 12 hours
- Children ages 14-15 who are left alone for more than 24 hours
- Children ages 16-17 may be left alone for more than 24 hours with a plan in place concerning how to respond to an emergency.

Reports alleging inadequate child care arrangements may be screened in for a child protection response according to the following guidelines:

- Children under age 11 should not provide child care to another child
- Children ages 11-15 who are placed in a child care role are subject to the same time restrictions of being left alone as listed above
- Children ages 16-17 may be left alone for more than 24 hours with adequate adult back up supervision.

If children are left alone at the time a report is received by the local child welfare agency, and the circumstances fall outside of the timelines listed above, the local agency may refer the matter to local law enforcement for an immediate child welfare and safety check.

School age children who are required to walk to school due to transportation patterns set by the local school district may also fall outside of the timelines listed above.

Reference: Minn. Stat. 626.556, subd. 2(g) (3)

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